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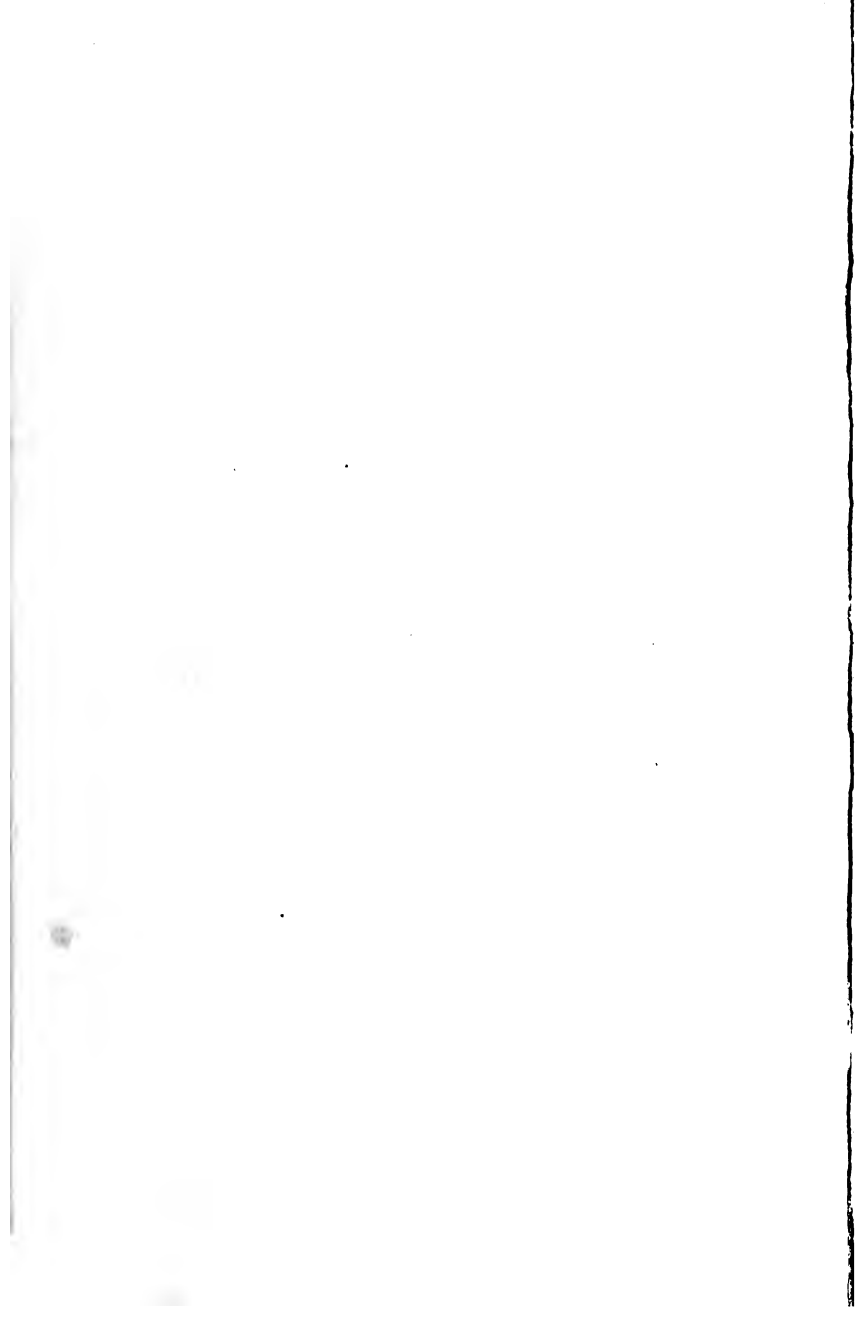
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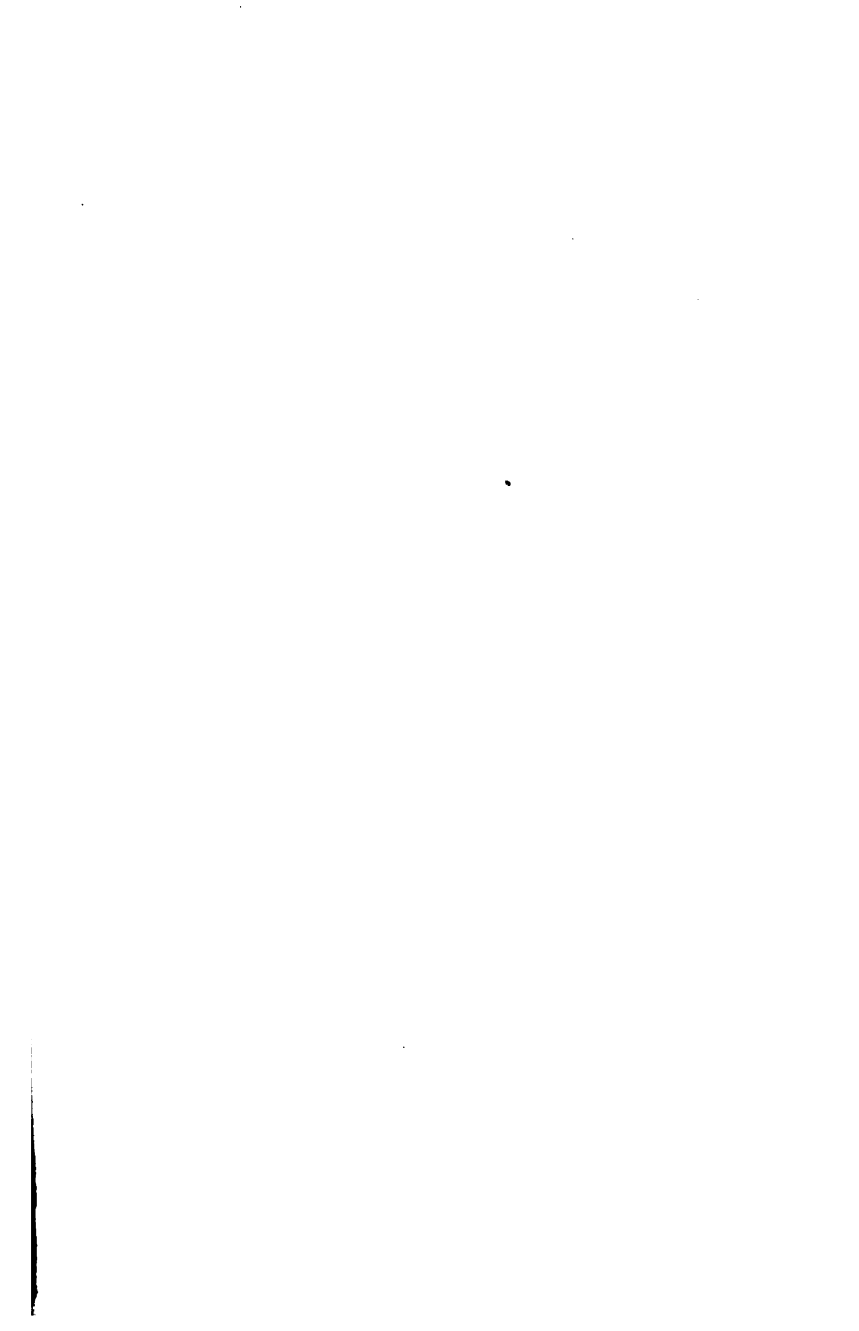
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"FIRST BOOKS TO OLDEST FRIENDS."

To My Father and My Mother, for their humor and example, their courage and affection; and to the Old One and those others of the Beloved Three to whom, those happy winter evenings, this book was read chapter by chapter as it was written, while the fire burned in the stove, and the night wind blew over Hartsdale.



Univ. of
California

PETER KINDRED

The town, in autumn, rambling in a slight valley among forests, is as lovely a spot as in all New England. It is on the frontier of the north, and lies beneath a deeper sky than even Boston, in a clearer air. Fires of gathered brown leaves tang through October; the air grows colder and and brighter, and vital with sunlight like some delicate and potent vintage. All this the new student notices not at all; he is engrossed in novel sensations proper.

From the moment he steps into the dusty train bound for Exeter, in the dark and forever unwashed station at Boston, his life becomes definitely enriched. The boy—but there, he is a boy no longer; he is a student at Exeter, an Exonian (a name that he will discover later, and probably dislike) and an upper middler. Within a week he will be asked to give the ablative of something, and addressed as Mr. Kindred by the famous, white haired professor. So I shall not call him the boy, either, but the man, Peter Kindred.

Born in New York at the close of the nineteenth century, he had grown in the usual manner, accepting his father's beliefs as he accepted his more gaudy ties, glad, indeed, that there should be such beliefs, and that he should be able to digest them. He lived by rule of fact; questions were asked and answered over his head, and he accepted the outcome without more ado. At times he was rebellious, but never as one who fought for the right, rather as one who secretly knew himself

to be wrong, but wished that he were right, and hoped by making a vast deal of pother to create a small atmosphere of rightness. In all, he was a healthy lad, not overly robust, keenly imaginative, and as for his easy system of ethics I would not have him otherwise, for men who disagree with their fathers before they are sixteen, are great nuisances, unless their fathers are drunkards. But Peter's father was not; he was an over clerk, possessed of a small income, at least, an income small for New York. He labored nine hours a day, had never labored less, and probably never would, but lived contentedly still, and took his joys pleasantly. He held no theory of the leisure class, but understood after a fashion that one might be a gentleman or not, and brought up Peter to be a gentleman.

That was why at sixteen Peter was sent to Exeter from a New York public school. It was no small sacrifice for Mr. and Mrs. Kindred, and even to Peter's younger sister who remained at home; for Peter's father it meant severe economy and even longer hours of work, it meant the curtailment of many of his small pleasures, but he had never planned otherwise; Peter should be a gentleman, although he hardly knew why. It was enough that other men sent their sons to college. As he remarked to his wife, Peter should have a chance, but what he expected of him afterwards I do not know, and neither did he.

No thrill is comparable to a man's first glimpse

of a real football player. If the man is from New York, where there are no football players of distinction, the creature will appear very close to divinity. Peter Kindred spent the two hours of his ride from Boston to Exeter in gaping about the car, picking out football men. There were, in truth, no football men on that train, but there were many who might have been; big, raw-boned westerners with fair hair and ruddy cheeks, of a type entirely novel to Peter. Such men never live in New York. The New York man is small and preoccupied. Later that day Peter did see a real hero, one Buck O'Brien, a famous halfback, and the fact that O'Brien was short and bunched and dapper lessened no whit the awe born in Peter's mind.

To Peter, the horde of great blonde huskies in their gray sweaters and dirty canvas togs, mounted above the fretful sons of successful business men and held a short but undisputed reign. Watching O'Brien, Peter, thinking of his father and his own sallow acquaintances in New York, was abashed.

What normal city boy has ever gone to Exeter and failed to accept brawn as a new basis for an estimate of the world?

To the New Yorker the most significant thing about New England is the odor. It is a fragrance of farm houses and apple orchards, of small rivers and low, rocky hills. It is a land of homespun. Peter will tell you that even today he remembers

the smell of country harness in the cab he hired to take him to the school, the unfriendly cleanliness of his rooms, and many odors that he cannot very well describe, except to say that there was the breath of wood fires throughout everything, and that the dormitories held an odor at once aloof and aged, with a faint touch of soap and water, and another of tobacco.

The freedom of having classes scattered through the day, and being wholly at liberty between them, delighted him, and gave him a fine sense of growing up. Watching the team scrimmaging on the practice fields, with the meadows and the dim autumn woods across the river under the sweep of open sky, stirred in Peter a sense of importance, a sense of energy directed at a goal, enthusiasm, a sense of belonging, somehow, to an heroic group. But for the most part the school did much to repress him, and his importance was manifest mostly at home during the holidays. The academic hush of the old school building, the wide chapel in which he met many of the traditions and customs of the school, and felt before their hoary dignity his own exceeding youth, the severe and impersonal routine of the class room that drove him often miserably to his desk until late at night, and the quiet roads between old houses and old trees, did much to give him over to loneliness and a faint melancholy.

He made no friends his first year at Exeter. There were chance acquaintanceships from the

dining hall and from the class room, but he had no friend in whose room he could be at home until well into his second year. After the custom of the school he said his "h'are ye" to whomsoever he passed in the street, and that was about all. I should not say that it was entirely his fault, nor could I say that it was not. He was too aware of the little he had to offer; it was not modesty, but a true humility. He thought it quite proper that he should be unnoticed. He grew to recognize faces; they were impersonal faces, belonging to this man who knew the leader of the glee club, and to that man who knew nobody. Of the two, the man who knew the leader of the glee club was the more polite. For the rest, they were equally unfriendly. Peter accepted it philosophically enough; from his corner, above the luxurious coffee of a late breakfast, he watched groups of cold cheeked, hair tossed New Englanders come stamping up the wooden stairs of the old P. E. A., laughing and trampling. Into the post office, warm, snug, murmurous with the sunny, low talk of men he went unobtrusively and shyly; at noon he walked alone on Water Street, and went silently in and out of the musty gloom of Batchelders for his paper. At evening, above his gorgeous but lonely waffles in Billie's, he saw the grave Southerners come down the steps into the dusky light and heard them drawl softly together. He envied all these heroes their company, and yet, if they had spoken to him, he would have been painfully

at a loss. However, there was no possibility of their ever noticing the youngster, Peter Kindred, who said nothing and was nobody.

His family found him sober and reflective, more quiet than he had been, uninterested in old acquaintances. It worried his mother, who attributed it to inferior nourishment, but his father advised her that their son was growing beyond nonsense, and that was all. She said no more about it, but stuffed Peter unconscionably; he, soothed and lulled by the care she took of him and the vast amount of food she stuffed him with, forgot Exeter somewhat, the clear, still evenings, the cold wide sky, the austere quiet of New England, and became again a creature of some importance to himself. That was proof positive to Mrs. Kindred, and she reproached herself bitterly for ever having let him leave her for such a place, where without doubt he was being starved. Yet Peter missed the waffles and he rather missed the coffee, too, sweet, steaming coffee in large, thick mugs; however, he ate all he could, and wisely held his peace.

The cold silence of the snow, the quiet frost of winter evenings when he turned from the growing dusk of the wide countryside, from the fresh and far travelled wind to the warm solitude of his room, fostered his loneliness and saddened him. It was the sorrow of youth inarticulate, sorrow because the earth was beautiful.

All winter Exeter sparkled with sun, and skates

flashed up and down the river, but Peter kept too often to his room. He took little pleasure in cold. If he skated, his fingers and his toes would hurt him; sometimes he did skate, and bought hot frankfurters and coffee afterwards. Then he felt splendid, but there was nothing for him to do later save read his Latin, and he felt very little like doing it. Yet if he sat alone as comfortably as he could, his feet in warm house slippers, he thought of none but small things. For the most part he dreamed of impossible adventures, and gave himself up to heroic imaginings. Sometimes he walked with an acquaintance until the clear green sky and an evening star betokened supper time. Sometimes he wandered aimlessly about the gymnasium, attempting this and that, but he hadn't the patience to practice at anything.

Spring with gnarled and broken lines made gaunt New England, and through the bleak days of March and April, Peter found it pleasanter to apply himself closely to his work. He had lived down his fear of the class room, but there had grown in its place a wholesome respect for its logic; he did not find it a difficult matter to do well in his studies; he would gladly have matched his learning at times against that of the professors, but he dreaded the sullen disfavor of the class. What short debates he was party to, he entered fervently, although he was generally wrong, but quick to admit it. He grew to take pleasure in the unravelling of an idea, but he was ashamed to

thrust himself forward. It was like taking an unfair advantage of fame from behind professional skirts. Nor did his instructors take much pleasure in his arguments.

May found him suddenly and swiftly, and troubled him with lilacs. Which were not all, I think, as he passed the Plimpton fields and heard the voices of girls in the woods across the river. But there, too, he was diffident; he did not believe that the pink-cheeked and laughter-loving seminary girl would be tolerant of him, when she might listen to the ribald court of what hero she would. Again, he would have been hopelessly befuddled if one had smiled on him, and it would have been a miserable youth who, striving vainly to be unconcerned, did finally put his arm about her waist. Indeed, a maiden smiled at him once, at least if she did not smile, she looked roguishly at him, and although he had been expecting it, and had prepared the banter to be exchanged, he could do nothing but run away as fast as his legs would carry him.

And yet, for all the drifting, for all the inexpressive motion of this first year at Exeter, it was a mighty year for Peter.

It was the beginning of his true life, and marked his first conscious introduction to himself as a unit of more or less importance among other units. It brought before him another ideal of manhood than the one he had known, and new vistas of work and solitude. Before Exeter there

had been gentle slopes; it was the sudden swoop over the tobogganed hill, and the falling away into flight, incomparably lovely and tenuous, though how lovely and how tenuous he would not realize until long afterward.

He returned to school his second year with greater confidence. He had no group of friends to make joyous the tidying of his new quarters, but the school was his friend, the unchanging halls, the majestic trees, and the October wind. Small things made him welcome, the knowledge of places and events, familiar eating houses, the ability to accept old duties lightly, and to direct worried newcomers. He greeted more men than he had known before, and was greeted by them in turn; his friends of the last year were glad to see him. It seemed to him as though he could boast of some small place in Exeter, and he was comfortably aware that he had not come, but that he had returned.

Perhaps it was this new dignity that impelled him to ask David to his room, and so into the years before him. He had noticed him wandering a bit forlornly in search of some hall or other, a short, dark fellow, with eager black eyes, and a twinkle at the end of his nose. They found the place together, and later David went back with Peter.

It was easy for Peter to talk to him; he had a pleasant way of listening, and an expressive way

of speaking. He made remarks significant with his hands, which were rugged, and yet suggestive of delicacy. He admitted his musicianship, and that evening in his own room he played for Peter a raw-boned piano he had rented. He played with a great show of temperament which won Peter at once, and unknown parts of him stirred to the music.

David was as much impressed with the sternness of Peter's mind, admiring the fashion in which Peter marshalled his facts for use. As for David, he was unaccustomed to facts, and had small use for them, but dismissed questions he could not answer lightly. Peter's influence roused him, however, and his more facile but less logical mind pried into corners where Peter did not go. Within a month they had become inseparable companions, and Peter's nature grew and burgeoned. He discovered music, and found that through David his sense of Autumn beauty, of youth and of vague romance could become more or less articulate.

They talked together of personal things, often of death, but never of life. There was no need to talk of life, it was comprehensible, but death was not. They were in the process of discarding God; to Peter God had outlived His usefulness. He had been a good God, and had zealously guarded Peter at night, from prayer time to waking. He had been a satisfactory Cause, to Whom it had been an easy matter to attribute effects. But as

the night time grew precious for sleep, prayer time grew irksome, and God was forgotten. And then, as Peter's learning grew, questions arose that were not answerable by the forgotten God. So Peter had accepted life, and wondered dismally about death, wishing that there were a God, but knowing that there was not.

Confronted with Peter's insistence upon, at least, a quest, David, too, was unable to accept his childhood faith.

"I am a Jew," he said. "But it is silly to believe that the one God would accept you and not accept me, or the myriad creatures of even stranger faith than mine who live on all the million planets. That would be too erratic."

Peter sliced the argument keenly.

"It seems absurd to believe in a God who would pick and choose, but it is even more absurd to reverence a God with no choice at all."

Peter had accepted the fact that David was a Jew, much as he accepted his friend's pliant wit, his music, the twinkle of his nose. He had never known any other Jew; he did not care for the word. If the word had been Saxon, or Scot, if there had been the broad flavor of the land in it, he would never have thought the Jews an inferior people, nor, indeed, would anyone, but there is an unpleasant sound to the word Jew, and Hebrew is as bad as Hittite.

Exeter did not share Peter's indifference to David's race, and left the two of them quite alone.

But David was well versed in solitude, and Peter had David, his friend; they had no need of other company. As for the Kindreds, they accepted David, doubtfully at first, but with increasing tolerance, although Mrs. Kindred was somewhat upset for a while that Peter's only friend at Exeter should be a Jew. Among the faculty, however, the two friends were well liked.

Inevitably with the vanishing of loneliness, the old heroes came slowly to lose their potency to Peter. David admired brawn as Peter did, but he was swifter to make a mock of stupidity, and indeed, with a few famous exceptions, Peter could no longer deny that the brawny were very, very stupid. Yet he was loth to surrender his awe of them, for there seemed to be nothing to take its place. And so, for a while, he clung obstinately to his heroes, but therein, I dare say, he was no different from any other school boy, for the American student cares little who earns him his glory, or what, indeed, that glory may be. Certainly Peter paraded down Fifth Avenue on a certain holiday after a victory over Andover, no less proudly, and wore his red carnation no less jauntily because, forsooth, the victory had been won by a lumberjack from Maine whom Peter had never met, and whom, in his heart he thought a boorish fellow.

Peter accepted his own friendlessness cheerfully, but he could not rid himself of a patient criticism of the school's attitude toward him, to-

ward David, and toward the popular lumberjacks and heirs-apparent. As yet, however, he had nothing to offer in place of them. It disturbed him a bit and made him more defensive than he would otherwise have been, and more inquisitive about people; the two friends held long and earnest discussions together, to gauge the worth of one man or another. But David was rather inclined to insist upon sympathy, appreciation, and imagination in a man, whereas Peter was unwilling to insist upon anything. It seemed almost as though he were looking for something behind a man, some enthusiasm or other, some cause, but he could not formulate it in his mind. The splendid youngsters of Exeter lacked immortality; their greatness was too fugitive, and the busy men of his own city were not great at all.

Winter, with David's room as an auxiliary refuge, was a much different matter from the year before. The sense of a wide country hushed with snow, of scattered villages and lonely houses, the yellow lamps of cottages low across the drifted fields, and the profound sense of isolation that had so preyed upon him now rendered him more warmly aware of his own snug existence, and the insistent beauty of the winter but added to the drowsy quiet of his room. And all this because there was another creature who would at such and such a time come familiarly through his doorway, or whistle to his window.

April went gradually into May, among showers and deepening green, and the school years drew to their close. The track season was over, and resurgent color scattered across the Plimpton fields as the various baseball teams warmed the kinks out of their muscles. Youngsters cavorted on the tennis courts, and village maidens strolled along the freshening streets, their hair caught in colored ribbons, their trim bodies in white linen. Over the top of the horizon the final examinations poked their fearsome heads, and Peter bent over his desk with determination.

Exeter was nearly at an end, and with it, Peter's youthful apprenticeship to manhood. The white-haired professor had called him a man, and therefore so had I, but he is still a boy. For where is manhood to be found? In the intolerance of faith? Or in the charity beyond?

So the finals crawled over the hills from Cambridge, twisting their horrid necks, and Exeter droned with preparations to meet them. Peter had no fear of them, but an anxiety to be done; at his preliminaries the year before he had found how strongly Exeter had prepared him. But he had found, too, how tired the long examinations made him, and what little enjoyment there was in anything until they were over.

With David he began to consider Harvard curiously, as one would consider a plighted woman. There was this that he knew, for instance, and these many things that he did not. He had picked

out a room for himself during the winter; the two had thought it better not to room together. As David pointed out, two rooms meant society, a friend, a place to visit. They were worried about a great many small questions, and David confessed to a fear that something or other would happen without him, so that he would have no place to eat and no classes to attend and no notice taken of him at all, and, in his gloomier moments, probably even no bed to sleep in. Peter felt much the same about it, but fortified himself with the thought that of the many thousands who had entered Harvard in the preceding generations, none to his knowledge had ever experienced insurmountable difficulty in living, and so he, too, would probably manage to live somehow or other, by looking around him very carefully, and letting nothing escape him. There were, besides, some fifty men of his class who were entering Harvard with him, and if they were frightened about it, they certainly concealed it admirably. Wherefore he resolutely put his fears behind him, and stuffed his memory with Latin verbs, geometrical triangles, and historic affairs.

June came, and in the drowsy gymnasium Peter and David, their watches before them, coats off and shirt sleeves rolled up, sped lightly through their finals, while in the noonday sun the old dormitories nodded and dozed, preparing for their serene summer slumber. Then came days of utter content, of late breakfasts, and long evenings

spent together idly, with no thought of any morrow, while Peter dreamed from the depths of a chair and David ran vagrant melodies across faint harmonies. Days of entire rest they were, when the two friends could find no dispute to rouse them from their pleasant listlessness. And then came mothers and fathers to wake the silent school, sisters and brothers, pretty cousins and portly uncles, and the senior class, donning their caps and gowns for the last time, marched solemnly and with traditional tread into the crowded chapel, and so out of Exeter. Out of the wide village streets, the shadowed paths and rivered woods, but not out of school; for many generations whose feet have been long silent in the halls, are Exeter, their songs, their heroes, and their myths, and as each class moves as a graduate across the campus, that class becomes a part of the tradition, and becomes one with Exeter.

Arm in arm, Peter and David walked to Peter's room, arm in arm they climbed the worn, familiar stair, and pushed through the open door. Below them murmured the crowd; doors were opened and shut, calls drifted in lazily through the wide window in the noonday drowse. Exeter was at an end; they had crossed a magic and tremendous mountain; they were graduates. They sat a long while in silence, staring out at the green branches of trees with the sunlight among the leaves. Before them lay the true apprenticeship, the final preparation for what magnificence they did not

know. To the south Harvard lay quietly beneath the blue sky; from her halls there had lately gone forth men into that unknown, bravely and marvelously accoutred. The thought grasped Peter about the heart, and he turned gravely to David.

"David," he said, and stretched his arms above his head, "next year I shall know so much . . . what there is to do, and what there is to be . . ."

"Peter," David said solemnly, "I wish I knew where to sign up for my meals!"

CHAPTER II

HOWEVER, it seemed that Harvard had expected their coming, and when Peter registered, which he found to be a simple enough matter, no one told him that he had no right to do so, but a weary and patient man handed him a large pink card, and sent him in search of his faculty advisor. He was struck by the great number of such pink cards moving aimlessly about. Upper classmen carried different colors, and moved about more purposefully, much as the second year men had done at Exeter. Peter made his way to Warren House, and waited on his advisor, watching the small group of men about him curiously. There was an unkempt lad from some northern village, powerful, and mother fearing. There was a lean and wan-looking elderly man who clutched a couple of shabby books close to his coat, and asked questions of Peter humbly. There was a keen-faced youth in tweeds, who wore tremendous rimmed glasses which gave him an affable and owl-like appearance, and an aristocratic-

looking fellow with a delicately chiselled face, who carried himself delightfully, his shoulders back and his chin high, and whom the professor seemed very glad to see again. Peter thought he was very fine, and wondered who he was; he wished that he himself made so splendid an appearance, or that David did.

Men whose lives are given to the contemplation of letters and sciences, who do not spend their days bickering in the market place, but whose dens are chosen from among the choicest rooms in the house, dens that remain strewn and inviolate for years, attain a quiet and complacent dignity which creates a deeper impression upon the perplexed youth of our land than all the doughtiest and most profound lectures ever given. There is something about a serene and vigorous old age which constitutes a fairer promise of heaven than all the creeds and tenets of belief.

Peter's advisor was such a man, a stalwart and patriarchal figure, unhurried and resolute. Peter felt that he must know a vast deal, as indeed he did, but Peter did not give sufficient credit to the holy quiet of the man's den, and to the rows upon rows of friendly books between the ceiling and the floor. But, mind you, I would not advocate a den of that sort for any common man; he would do nothing in it at all.

For all his learning, the professor proved to be amazingly ignorant of the courses Peter had chosen to attend, and since there was therefore

nothing to say one way or another about them, he signed Peter's card and dismissed him. Peter passed the Union with a warming sense of belonging finally to Harvard, and walked slowly down Massachusetts Avenue toward Harvard Square.

The street, with its small, well-appointed shops, hummed with the coming and going of students. They passed in groups or singly, alert, cheery, well-groomed men; and all with the same satisfied look on their faces. For a college is no more than an attitude toward life, and the kindly gentlemen of Oxford are as far removed from the contented moralists of Harvard, as the latter differ from the wistful youths of Yale, and the happy children of Princeton.

To Peter there was the same romance in the name Harvard as there had been in Exeter, and he was as mightily beguiled by the small but venerable Yard and the enchanted flavor of the halls, which, like old men before a fireside, seemed in their silence to be forever considering themselves.

At Holyoke Street he turned down toward Mount Auburn and climbed the creaking steps of No. 26. He had chosen a room in a ramshackle frame house at the edge of the gold coast, opposite the yellow walls of the Institute.

Below his windows the men passed down the street, through the gate, and into the Institute. Peter watched them with a deal of wonder and a stir of envy at first. For the Institute is the solid basis of Harvard clubdom. It goes through

Harvard with a coarse comb, separating the wheat from the chaff; all men who are socially possible are Institute men. Among these the exclusive clubs move with finer combs in varying degrees, but, on the whole, a man at Harvard is an Institute man, or he is not.

Peter's room was two dilapidated flights up, but he found, to his surprise, that such a place was considered very fine at Harvard, much more desirable, indeed, than the new brick houses far removed from the coast, or the dormitories in the Yard. But that was characteristic of Harvard, to put up splendid draperies in a tumbled down room, and glory in the result. Peter had no splendid draperies, but David envied him his room and his two sunny windows facing the south. David had chosen a modern brick building not far from the Square, where he had his own bath to delight him, but no sun at all. He had installed a grand piano, and was making a desk of a soap box.

Peter's room, at first in its barrenness, had depressed that gentleman almost to despair, but as he began to unpack his furniture, he saw some possibility in it, and when at last his rug was down, he haled David over to view it. David was impressed, but left at once for his soap box and some intricate figuring he had been doing, whereby he hoped to discover some way of also buying a bed.

Peter's desk chair had not come, and to ask advice, he tapped on his neighbor's door. A voice

roared for the son-of-a-gun to come in, and he stepped into a scene of such boundless confusion that he could do nothing but stare. At first glance it looked as though some truckman had moved the belongings of one room into another, and had dumped them all pell mell on top of each other. Clothes and books competed with sofa cushions and pictures for the seats of chairs, and overflowed onto the floor. Where there were no books, there were shoes, and occasional beer mugs. In the midst of this chaos stood a dark-browed, rugged man, puffing at a long calabash pipe.

"Oh," he said, "come right in. Excuse me. I thought you were a friend of mine." He swept the vista of the room with his arm. "Find a place to sit down, and make yourself at home. I'm not usually so upset, but our amiable goody forgot me to-day."

He sat down himself and regarded Peter curiously. Before him, Peter was shy and confused; he explained the reason for his visit, and asked him if he could suggest anything to do about the chair. The dark-browed man regarded the ceiling somberly, puffed at his pipe, and shook his head, but suggested at last that the chair would probably turn up some day, and that a desk chair was a small matter at best, and that if Peter needed one, he could let him have several to choose from. Peter thanked him, and somewhat encouraged, asked him how one might unearth the bursar and pay him the fabled ninety dollars.

The man directed him to Dana Hall, and Peter asked him how he would know what to do when he got there.

"Trust to the Lord," said the big man, and lost himself in reverie. Peter stammered a thanks, and returned to the tidy primness of his own room. The advice, for all its absurdity, was soothing and Peter's troubles fell away. He no longer felt responsible for his affair with the bursar.

That night both he and David went to the freshman reception at Brooks House, hoping for much, but doubting that anything would befall them. They were given little tags on which they wrote their names. These they tied diffidently in their buttonholes, where they dangled unnoticed for the rest of the evening. With a vast mob of shoving and perspiring men they were herded into a large room where they sat on the floor at first, but later stood in a vain effort to hear some part of the speeches. On a low platform tall heroes appeared, bowed, were tremendously applauded, spoke, waved their arms, grinned, bowed, and sat down in the din. Mr. Molmf presented Mr. Smith of the Grmmpump, who in turn presented Mr. Xmymst. Tommy Reilly, captain of the eleven, rose and received an ovation. Amid a dead silence, he started in.

"Well, fellows," he said. The applause was interminable. Through it he went on.

"Well, fellows, Percy Haughton here thinks we've got a pretty good team here this year, and

I guess Yale will think so all right." Cheers, shrieks, whistles, and the prolonged stamping of feet. "Well, fellows, all I want to say is I want you fellows to stand back of the team and give us the right support and get some good, snappy cheering over this year when we go down to New Haven, and I guess we can leave the rest to Percy Haughton here." He bowed awkwardly and sat down, amid a bedlam. Peter and David fought their way to the door and emerged disheveled.

They walked back through the Yard together across the Autumn moonlight, under the looming, black shadows of the dormitories. Beyond the wall, a car jarred distantly around the curve of the street, and died away toward Boston. Occasional low voices reached them, and the twang of a mandolin. The sky was calm and luminous with stars, the light breeze redolent of earth. But Peter and David could find no words to gauge their thoughts, wherefore they left each other without discussing the event.

Again the greater freedom of the college aroused in Peter a sense of transformation, of gathering manhood, and for a while he, too, walked with his shoulders thrown back and his chin held high. Then lectures began, and he forgot everything in the rush to buy books, and the trouble of their expense. In the large classes he sat unnoticed, scribbling notes, and hearing for the first

time new principles in unexplored fields of thought discussed and expounded. To each he reacted with a faint shock of appreciation, believing everything, his imagination powerfully exercised. David came with the same enthusiasm from his classes, and their discussions grew top heavy with the weight of their learning until they made no headway at all.

But they were aware at once that they had been made free to enjoy what they would, and they both made all speed to acquire new tastes. It had struck home most of all the day on which the man next door, whom Peter knew as Frank, had asked Peter to drop in on him for tea, and with the most serious manner in the world had actually boiled tea in an old brass pot, and offered it to Peter with an accompaniment of small cakes. The mere idea of a man preparing tea would have afforded Exeter enough mirth for a full season, but at Harvard it was quite a natural function, arousing no comment whatsoever. I should say more of the tea party in that inchoate room, to whose needs no goody could have ministered, however conscientious, but for the speed with which Peter bought himself a tea set, relinquishing two books to do it, and in turn invited David formally to tea. David, coming to scoff, remained to pray, and thought it marvelously pleasant and after all not as unmanly as one might imagine. But he could tell Peter nothing about George Moore.

“He talked of him as though of course I knew

all about him," Peter explained, "and so I nodded my head as wisely as I could. This chap Moore must be somebody."

And then again as the afternoon waned, and it was growing dusk, he spoke out of the depths of his chair.

"There is an awful lot to learn, David," he said, "but somehow or other I think it will be worth learning."

Peter and David did nothing very startling, although they fairly luxuriated in the realization that they might. Peter, it is true, bought an etching, and spent the better part of a morning hanging it in his room, and then, ashamed to face the accusing thought of his father, tried to sell it to David. But David would have none of it, and so Peter was forced to keep it on his wall, and put a brave face on the matter.

Peter was amazed to hear lean and shabby men dispute and argue in class about minor points; the tenacity with which they clung to their questioning, and the tolerant silence in which the class accepted the interruption, made a deep impression on him. He passed such men often in the street, and his instinctive dislike was mixed, nevertheless, with respect for their dogged and real passion to learn. Peter, too, was in quest of knowledge, but more as an amateur; it was not such a tremendous matter as all that to him, and he was willing to take a good part of it on faith; he did

not doubt but that he would live as well for letting certain murky points go by him as he would if he understood everything thoroughly, and when a particularly bored class would at last stamp its displeasure to the floor, he felt that the displeasure was legitimate and stamped along with it. The professors, almost without exception, took joy in argument, and the more deeply the debate wound down into fine details, the more excited they grew. This recognition of the student mind by members of the faculty contributed to Peter's sense of importance, although it astounded him to hear aired the intricate knowledge, acquired by tremendous reading, of those thin and shabby men who always argued.

Even Peter essayed a discussion at one time, but was so bewildered at his temerity and his notoriety that words tripped themselves up in his throat and lay there entangled, blocking any exit. So, his return question remaining unanswered, the lecturer went on with his exposition, and Peter sat in a large radius of silence, trying hard to look unaware of anything but his book.

Peter's neighbor whispered to him, "Did you understand that?"

Peter shook his head, and the man passed him his notes which were written very neatly, in great, fat letters. Peter smiled gratefully, and after the lecture was over the two men walked down the steps of Sever together and on past the library.

Peter looked at his companion curiously; he had a delicately modeled face, with a smooth chin; his face might have been patted into shape. His eyes were wide and blue; he appeared rather gentle and pleasant.

"My name is Jill," he said.

"Mine is Kindred," Peter answered.

"It's a very good course, I believe," Jill said, "but a little difficult; that is, not hard, you know, but awkward. The man is rather a bore."

There was nothing in particular to say to that, and the two men parted.

"Drop up to see me some time," Jill said. "Plympton Street—thirty-five, I believe." He waved his hand a bit languidly, and went across the Yard, but Peter turned back to his room with a sense of having met someone.

In Frank's room he found a great blond hero who sat sprawled in a chair, and looked at Peter very much as though he were looking at a friend's child brought out for the occasion.

"If you take my advice," he said to Peter, "you'll go out for a managership."

Peter looked at Frank rather frightened at that and Frank burst out laughing.

"Let him alone," he said.

"To tell the truth," Peter said, "I rather thought that the best part of Harvard was not having to go out for anything."

The other man regarded the ceiling in gloomy amazement.

"I thought I might try out for one of the literaries," Peter said uncertainly.

The man stirred himself. "For heaven's sake," he said, "don't go in for that silly twaddle. Do something real."

"What?" Peter asked.

"Oh, anything. Try out for a team. Try out for a managership. Soccer or lacrosse or something. Be somebody. Don't be a runt."

"Do you think I could make anything?" Peter asked.

"Oh hell," the man said, "how do I know?"

And later Frank came into Peter's room for a moment.

"You know, I wouldn't take that too seriously," he said. "But I'd make up my mind to what I wanted of Harvard. If you want the clubs, and all that, you'll have to hop in, of course, and be someone. Personally, I should prefer to be a runt."

Then, as an afterthought, he added, "But don't let that influence you, either."

It rather fitted in with Peter's thoughts in the matter, and Frank rather fitted in with them, too. As for him, although a junior, he had taken a vagrant liking to Peter, who seemed almost miraculously bewildered. So Peter wondered what he wanted of Harvard, for a while, and came to no conclusion.

Jill, too, gave him counsel.

Peter came to see him one afternoon, and found

him in a blue and gold dressing gown, smoking an elaborate hookah. His room was heavily hung with silk and cloth and held a faintly pungent odor of joss sticks. Jill blinked at him from the floor, where he was sitting cross-legged, and told him lazily to come in and find a seat. Above the fireplace a brass idol stared; the room was curious with little bronze figures and gloomy hangings.

"I must certainly show this to David," Peter said to himself. He thought it extremely fine and very mature, and felt proud to be there, in that room with Jill, at Harvard.

"You will find," Jill said, "the literary crowd very unintelligent and brazen; the 'Monthly' and the 'Advocate'—ill-mannered boors."

"This chap told me to try out for a managership," Peter said. "How do you do that?"

Jill raised his hands before him. "Heavens," he murmured, "don't do that. There is nothing sillier in all the wide world."

"But what shall I do?" Peter asked.

Jill smoked meditatively at his hookah, and the water cleared and clouded. At last he shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear fellow," he said, "must you rush sophomorically about? Nonsense. Don't do anything."

"Not anything?" Peter asked in some amazement.

"I shouldn't," Jill said, and puffed comfortably.

"Yes," Peter said, "but you're settled, you see."

"Bother," said Jill. "So should you be."

"No," Peter answered, "I'm not sure what I want of things."

"Honors?" Jill asked. "Clubs, position? Silly rot?"

"No," Peter said again, and then he added, "Besides, what club would have me?"

"Any one," Jill answered, "if you gave up thinking and ran around and became somebody."

"Of course," Peter said, "I didn't come to college for that."

"No," Jill said.

"But I did come to find out—something."

"Kindred," Jill said, "you're too eager. If you sat still a bit, life would come to you. Life is meant to be tasted slowly. You will waste the best part of it trying to find out what it's all about."

"Perhaps," Peter said doggedly. "But I shall have to find out what it is."

"You can find it more exquisitely in a star above Corey Hill at evening, or a child's face," Jill said.

"No," Peter said, "I'll not find what I want of life in any child's face. And I won't find what I want of Harvard there, either. It isn't clubs, but it's something. Something to do. Not just here, but always."

He talked it over with David that night, after David had been playing idly at his great piano.

"Do you think I'm too eager, David?" he asked. "I suppose I am, a bit. And yet, I couldn't possibly sit quietly on the floor and smoke a hookah. But you see, I don't want to rush around and be a manager of something, either. What do I want, David? . . . It might be pleasant just to be a runt, don't you think? And yet—one ought to do something."

"Of course," David said.

Through the early fall weather, Peter did little but look carefully at men about him, yet the more he saw of club men, the less he thought that he, too, might be a club man. For they seemed troubled by nothing. He and David talked over their days together.

"I love to look at them," Peter said to him, as the sun poured through his ancient windows, and the two friends sat watching the returning groups of men stride from their lectures down Holyoke Street. "But they have had everything settled for them long ago."

"Do you know," David said, "I've met a remarkable man by the name of Wiener. He's very ugly, and he has classes in the slums."

"I'm not very keen on the slums," Peter said.

"I know . . . I wasn't either. I'm not now, of course . . ."

He leaned from the window and pointed to a

dark, little man hurrying down the street, his hands full of books.

"See," he said, "there he goes. Hello . . ." he called, and waved his hand. The man turned and grinned, and hurried on. But Peter at the window turned away uncomfortably.

"Bother," he said at last, "let's call for Jill and go to Boston."

In the evening the three walked through the lamp-lighted Square, and down into the draughty depths of the subway. The dull red train poked its blunt nose around a corner, and crawled to their feet; with them inside it ricocheted off toward Boston, and with a sudden cessation of clamor, soared beautifully over the bridge. Before them lay the Charles, misted in a strangely deep and dull blue, small yellow lights marking the gradual curve of the river bank, reflected in the water, and dividing the monotone of horizon and river. Above the lights along the river bank stretched the low roofs of Boston, in faint tones, while in the clear green sky toward the west a solitary evening star hung midway between earth and the zenith. Farther down the river Harvard Bridge spun a gradual arc of lights from shore to shore, and beyond it Corey Hill was already lost in the dusk. It was a landscape that Peter was never to tire of, in all the years he would pass and repass it, and he sat breathlessly watching it, while David at his side dreamed of a music that might compass and express it.

Boston, with its drift of faces, its narrow, windy and intriguing alleys, the close bustle and sense of gathered pleasance, aroused the three men coming from the quiet of Cambridge, to a feeling of adventure and carousal. They strode down Tremont Street arm in arm, turned sharply at the Touraine, struck down Essex Street, and so arrived at Charlie Wirth's.

They pushed through the turning doors, and came at once into a great clatter of dishes, a gargantuan odor of cooking, and the blue smoke of tobacco. They made their way to the rear of the room, sat down in a corner, and looked about them. A waiter came and smiled at them, and presently reappeared with three seidels of foaming brown Culmbacher, dark, gold brown, with iridescent gleams in it. This they started to drink manfully; Jill had rather a delicate way of drinking his beer, but it was a bit incongruous to see him smack his lips after it. Peter, drinking on an empty and unaccustomed stomach, presently felt dizzy, and found the beer bitter.

"Here," Jill said, "is the life of the student. To work and dream . . . to feed the soul richly . . ."

"A bit barren," David said shortly.

"It's very fine," Peter said, "but, of course, one ought to do something."

"Do you believe that, too," Jill asked of David.

"I certainly do," David answered. "There's nothing in just living along."

Jill sighed, and said:

"Did you suggest to Kindred that he become the manager of something?"

"No."

"I suggested that he become a gentleman."

"Hm," said David doubtfully, and then was silent.

Peter turned to Jill. "Don't you mean by gentleman, a man who practises a fine morality?"

"Rather a man with a proper sense of beauty."

"I'm not sure of that," Peter said. "I rather fancy the morality."

But late that night in the yellow gleam of Peter's room on Holyoke Street, David gave judgment.

"Rather an ass, I think," he said.

"Well," Peter answered, "possibly you're right."

Within a fortnight Peter found the college and the Boston press considering the Princeton game in gathering excitement, and he himself was aroused at the prospect, and spent a great deal of time discussing the matter pro and con. As for the college, there was nothing else talked of, how Princeton had beaten Vanderbilt more handily than Harvard, that Briggs of Princeton, and Dillon, were no better backs than Harvard could boast, perhaps, but that Harvard had no man in the backfield to compare with Durenbeck. There was a great deal of talk of Reilly, and a general

cheerful reliance on Haughton. Through it all was a sense of holiday, of women and tea parties, of shiny rooms and mothers and chaperons, of a common weal, and a common hope. Here was the youth of a province extending a guest friendship to the youth of another province, a time of fete, a mingling and rivalry of colors, of songs, of morals and traditions.

The football men were hidden from the public and from their hiding place came reports of this man and that man. As at school, Peter found himself taking satisfaction and pride in these men who were no more than names to him, much as though he were their chosen companion, as though Devereaux's big shoulders were his own, as though he himself boasted of Armstrong's long spiral punts. In a sort of way he felt himself pitted against Princeton, and became obsessed with the desire to see the sturdy Princeton team thoroughly beaten. To David he was blasphemous in his desire, but David was as stirred as he, and together they invoked untold accidents to blight Dillon and Briggs and that terrible immortal Durenbeck. For that matter, the entire Princeton team appeared to Peter in a mysterious and romantic light, like warriors of fabled prowess from some distant and unknown land, and the Harvard men who went to meet them, grown suddenly warmly intimate to his life, carried with them his own rivalry and battle lust.

The day of the game was flawless, in November,

and Peter awoke to the smell of wood fires, cold bright sunlight, and an unwonted sense of something about to happen. The Yard, the Square, the clubs along the coast were decked out in huge red banners with the black football H. Men moved through the streets with red flowers in their buttonholes; big machines with gray-furred women folk, flaunting bits of color, sped up and down Mount Auburn Street in the sun. Mothers and daughters passed below his window, well attended, carrying rugs and coats. A group of alert Princeton men, with slim, dark faces over big yellow flowers, came swaggering down Holyoke Street, and swung south toward the bridge. A student went by in a noisy racing car, a pert maiden rolled up in a rug at his side, and other cars followed him, some trailing banners of orange and black. David came racing over, excitement shining in his face, and together he and Peter snatched a bite of lunch, and started off for the field.

Boylston Street to the bridge was full to overflowing with a slow-moving tide of motors and people. Colors caught the sun, and danced, blue, red, yellow and green. Bright-eyed maidens laughed over their furs; motors crawled by in the surge of folk, making a great clamor of horns. Men of all ages moved forward together, holding the arms of their women, old and young, laughing and quiet, with rugs and waving banners. Far ahead, across the bridge, the tide turned toward

the sprawling Stadium, into the narrow gate to Soldiers' Field, scattered across the grass, and hummed up into the bleached white, circling tiers of seats. David and Peter, finding their places, drew their coats about them and looked curiously around.

Opposite, across the green gridiron with its regular white lines, flared the orange of Nassau. At the base of the stand three cheer leaders in black sweaters waved their arms and sprang into the air, and the Princeton cheer, insurgent and menacing, snapped back and rolled across the field. A few unhurried figures moved about on the grass below; the stands were nearly full, murmuring and stirring, expectant, and along the whole circle color bobbed and nodded and gleamed through umber shadows and yellow, slanting bands of sunlight. Over it all stretched the wide, deep, and tranquil sky, with white clouds low in the east, far off, above the faint roof tops of Boston. The Princeton section rose to its feet with a noise of myriad dry leaves, and after some preliminary humming, launched into a melody. The sound floated in the bowl of the great Stadium, and died away, hoarse and mellow; there was a prolonged clapping of hands. Across the field a fair-haired man in a black sweater walked down the side lines, looking up at the stands, exhorting them to something. The Harvard team ran across the green below, Reilly at the head, a solid phalanx of black, with trailing and fluttering red

blankets; the stands rose and thundered; and Peter's anxious heart grew warm and big, and he took a deep breath. David gripped his arm, and they stood there, staring down at Harvard together, at the embodiment of their own manhood and their own faith. They stood so until the stands had rustled down again, and then they sat down as well, in a tense silence, waiting for the opening whistle.

But is it all no more than a fierce loyalty to intimate things? And for those older men, whose college days have been a memory a long while, is it no more than a resurgent battle lust? I think it is something greater; I think it is an expression of faith to the young, an articulation: "This is my faith, these are my people, my ideals, my purposes; they are worth fighting for." And to the elders, is it not a rejuvenation of belief, a freshening of faded dream and old pride, a rising to the ancient and forgotten toast?

Late that afternoon, when Harvard crept to defeat through the raw dusk, Peter and David sat bowed and chill in their seats, weary and tragic, but undaunted, cheering and singing with hoarse and unrecognizable voices. Silently they made their way at the end across the misty grass, and plodded home through the evening, stretching their cramped and stiffened muscles, silent until they sat at last before the grate fire in David's room, feeling the drowsy warmth obliterate all but an insistent sense of catastrophe.

There followed days of anxiety and puzzlement, of grave consideration of past scores, and uneasy prophesying. Breaking in upon them came the shock of Princeton's defeat of Yale, and after, the stir of final preparation for New Haven.

Peter and David, having no means of getting there, waited in Boston. They learned of Harvard's victory with a curiously deep satisfaction, as though they themselves had been justified in something, and with a lifting sense of the lordliness of Boston, of Harvard, and of themselves. They celebrated the evening at Wirth's, and, feeling in no mood for the deserted streets of Cambridge, drifted into a movie afterward, jubilant.

Far to the south Harvard men caroused through the amused restaurants and theaters of New York, busying themselves with their youth and with their victory.

The next morning lectures swung sharply into stride, and Harvard, sober and forgetful, settled down to work.

Afterward came the bleak season of the year; the air grew colder and began to rumor of snow, evening crept into afternoon, night at its heels, the sky grayed and the water darkened. Earth grew bare and sharp, November slipped through the profound, chilled quiet of Thanksgiving Day into December, and the Christmas holidays drew close.

Peter was in high spirits at the thought of home,

as was David, but David was the more anxious to be at home, for Peter, after the first day spent with his family, would think only of escape again.

New York in the early morning smelled remotely of the sea, but there was not the difference to Peter there used to be when he came down from Exeter. In the Boston air there was the sea, but there were also houses and the smoke of trains, and open spaces, and the surrounding farms and countryside. In New York, however, there was the bitter bright smell of stale things, and a wind out of blue shadowed street bottoms.

The Kindred family was asleep when Peter crept into the flat, but his sister awoke, and slipping into a kimona stood in her doorway smiling sleepily, her short brown hair in disorder, her face wrinkled with sleep and with the pillow. Peter kissed her and she surveyed him with interest. He went into his room with a stealthy joy, a casting aside of burdens and responsibilities, assuming the easy throne arranged for him. The maid moved through the kitchen, his parents awoke, and the day started. His mother called him in to her, and with his face between her hands, bewailed his thinness, and foretold the immediate washing of his hair, while his father smiled at him from the doorway, eagerly and a bit wistfully, Peter thought. He was indeed welcome home, and it was with a very grateful sense of it that Peter, albeit uneasy at his mother's prophesy, went into the small, warm dining room and ate his break-

fast, pouring a great deal of cream on his oatmeal, and pressing large slices of butter on his toast.

But by the next day's noon he had wearied of his kingdom, the narrow lamp-lit hall of the flat, the small rooms, the sour and brown odor of all the other kitchens in the house drifting vaguely about his own demesne, and lying stubbornly in wait outside. The red and soiled gray walls that peered in at his windows made him impatient as they always did, and in the narrow and noisy streets he found no solace, and the insolent roof tops above his head depressed him. He began to think again of his sunny room at college, the movement of feet up and down below his window, the dark river and the barren trees. In that mood he wrote a letter to David.

"The family," he wrote, "are so contented and happy, David, that I can hardly understand my own impatience. But sometimes I wonder if it is content, or just a will to make the best of things. Their lives seem to be nothing but a succession of the most trivial happenings, and I think it hurts father that I can't take the interest in such little things that he does. For instance, he wants me to go with him to a lecture on India, somebody's personal travels, I believe, and then he must know about my courses, and your courses, and there is no end of gossip, mostly of bridge parties. They make me feel as though they were getting nowhere, just growing old. Edith had a tea in my honor, and her friends are no different than ever;

some of them are rather pretty, and they all laugh all the time, and talk about nothing but people. I wonder if a man could fall in love with such a woman. I wonder if I could. It would certainly be an awfully silly thing to do, wouldn't it?"

David sent back a long letter, but light-hearted.

"It wouldn't be as silly as you think to fall in love, old anchorite," he wrote. "And I dare you to kiss one of those laughing girls. But if you do, by all holy things, write me about it at once, and I'll keep your letter as a human document. . . ."

David's letter lightened the drag of the holiday week, and with the Christmas fragrance of fir trees in New York, Peter roused himself and considered kissing someone. But he saw no way of doing it, although he picked out one of his sister's friends as an agreeable choice, and almost imagined himself falling in love with her. January and college again tore him somewhat rudely from Eros, however, and after he had held the young lady's hand an awkward moment or two overtime, and had murmured something inadequate about writing, he started to forget her, and did forget all about her even before his only letter to her had been answered.

Snow fell over Boston, muffling the sharp lines of the landscape in amazing white, blanketing life in upon itself and huddling the countryside. In the streets, tiny muckers threw snowballs at one another, at students and professors, at white-hooded trolley cars and lumbering coal wagons.

The sun on the snow dazzled, and from the dripping roofs snow avalanches plumped into the drifts along the gutters, with mock thundering. Over night the earth was whitened until it sparkled and glistened in the sun, and the air was buoyant and snowy. Men tramped through the streets in high goloshes that flapped about their shins and jingled as they walked, and sleighbells chimed on Mount Auburn Street. The college was at once very cheerful, and Peter, returning, went in search of David.

But Peter found Wiener in David's room, and that chilled him, and gave the wrong flavor to his return. And David, he thought . . . there was something wrong with David.

"It's the damnable class consciousness of everybody," David said, at one time.

"I know it's undemocratic," Peter answered, "of course . . . And yet, I find a lot more satisfaction in looking out of my window at the tall snobs as they go by, than in waving to a dozen . . . a dozen Wieners."

But David very sensibly thought Peter a snob, and unkind, besides, all of which I dare say he was, and so David would have nothing to do with Peter for a week, an occasion which Peter took sadly, but refused to apologize. Perhaps he was a little jealous of Wiener. . . .

Again Peter grew lonely, but not as he had been at Exeter, for his loneliness was mixed with impatience, and yet with a sense of development. He

read eagerly. Early in his second term he was introduced to the great Russians, and brought his startled views to Frank.

"Look here," he said, "these folk are no more satisfied than I am. I thought everyone was satisfied when he grew up. But it doesn't seem as though they ever find an answer to anything. They just poke around."

He drew his knees up and laced his fingers about his shins.

"It's a rum sort of uneasiness," he said, "this will to be square with life—doing the right thing—the big thing. It's easy to get up and howl for the poor, I guess . . . like Wiener," he thought to himself. . . . "Only there's not much sense in that. There's something bigger somewhere . . . something to get down deep . . . some wise, impersonal thing . . . to settle everything, and keep it settled. Keep it settled definitely."

"Yes," said Frank, "and then I shall sleep like a good one, instead of lying awake at night bothering about things that are none of my bloody business."

In February Cambridge was pelted with hail in fine, stinging particles, or whipped with the gale, or drenched in sleet, and at last after a long week of gray weather, Peter, fairly lonely and a bit restless, found refuge in the warm oblivion of the Boston movies, where for very little of his

sparse allowance he could buy, in darkness stirred with music, a sort of trance, a cessation of his own breathing, living and moving, and a projection into the untroubled if erratic lives of heroes and heroines. David considered it a waste of time, but Frank went with him once, and became so boisterously critical of the sentimental clap trap, and so loud in his undisguised remarks that Peter, embarrassed and notorious, was glad to escape. Thereafter he went alone, and since he had, therefore, no one with him to whom he felt an apology was due for the screen nonsense, he did not mind it at all.

For the actors before the screen, with very few exceptions, he felt a sort of humorous contempt, mostly by reason of their strange and naïve views of society. The women, upon the other hand, appeared to him erotic and romantic. In them he saw beauty and mystery and sex. They disquieted him in a gentle way, and haunted his waking dreams with suggestion. It was not that he fell at all in love with any one, but that he was intrigued by woman, by romance, by kisses and love making, and all the subtle hidden lines of bodies. These women made the streets at evening adventurous for Peter, and all in all, he gave more thought to them than was good for him. But I doubt that he would have played at more than a courtly and melancholy wooing with any of them, a discreet sighing, and quite a sexless possession.

The winter grew feeble and soiled, full of senile humor, beckoning folk out of doors with beaming sun and cloudless skies, only to freeze them to their marrows, and blow tears into their eyes. At the close of such a day Peter came into Jill's room, and found him in the uncertain firelight that fled about among his hangings and burned and paled across the bronze gods and the brass gods of his room. Jill, by the fire, motioned him absently to a chair, and continued to read from a slim book, as though he were quite unaware of Peter.

"Baudelaire," he said at last, and sighed.

Peter wondered who Baudelaire might be, and said nothing. Jill held out the book to him.

"Look," he said, "you can't make it out very well, but it's rather a wonderful binding. I had it done in Edinburgh. The main thing is the color . . . you can't see it in this light. It's a sort of beige, and matches a tie I had and was rather crazy about . . . It's quite lovely."

Again Peter could find nothing to say. The room was spiced with burning joss, hidden away from Cambridge, in stillness. Jill read in a low whisper, and Peter sat silently listening.

"Of course it loses in translation," Jill said.

"It's rather sleepy, isn't it?" Peter said awkwardly.

Jill stared at him and Peter moved uncomfortably.

"Rather wailing, I mean," he said.

"Dear me," Jill remarked, and Peter made haste to justify himself.

"It's not very real . . . as though the man were trying awfully hard to be that sort of thing . . . or the woman. And then when he is . . . or she . . . why, he might just as well not be. I mean . . . do you really like it?"

"I say," Jill drawled slowly, "you *are* an ignorant little creature, aren't you?"

He spoke without malice, and went back to his reading, but an embarrassed Peter got up and went out quietly. In the street he took a deep breath, and went home.

"Frank," he said to him that night, "who was Baudelaire?"

And later, "Do you think that sort of thing is important, Frank?"

But to himself he said, "What is important?"

He could not answer that. Yet it seemed to him very definitely that it was not important to care so much for the cover of a book. He ended by growing fairly angry about it.

CHAPTER III

IN JULY the Kindreds went to Europe, taking Peter with them. It was a dream long cherished by his mother, one not lightly realized, either, but they had been saving for it many years, and when Peter won a small scholarship, Mr. Kindred asked for and was given his first long vacation. They travelled in the smallest cabins of the first class, ostensibly ashamed of their extravagance, secretly enthralled. Peter was uninterested in Europe, but excited at the planning, the packing, the bustling about and the radiant anticipation of his parents and Edith. The wharf and the high bulking steamer, the solemn leave-taking all around him, the smell of tarred rigging, of the windy decks and the salt sea, the sombre notes of the fog horn sounding high overhead, thrilled him with a sense of adventure, so that he felt fairly sentimental, looking back at the dwindling wharf, and waved his handkerchief with the rest of them at what of a sudden he felt to be his home-land.

In the deep center of the ship his family were

unpacking in their tiny cabins, bubbling with laughter and energy, opening gifts of fruits and books, scribbling hurried postals for the pilot to take back with him. Edith awkwardly held a newly opened letter close to what she took to be her heart, and managed to laugh and cry after a maidenly fashion. Peter, leaning against the rail of an upper deck, the wind from the open sea blowing on his face, watched the patient Statue of Liberty go by, a dull and forgotten tower on a background of barges, ferryboats and distant factories. The wind from the Narrows was rumorous, the scene about him drab, save for occasional rusty ships, tramps and schooners, lumbering in from the wide sea, or lying sleepily at anchor. Before him was Europe, beyond many horizons. For two weeks he was to be a member of a small community; the thought stirred him to wonder what company the ship might hold, until he found the deck chilly at last, and climbed down the companionway. Inside the ship he heard the steady and muffled rhythm of engines, and felt the slight shuddering of the vessel's progress. White-coated stewards padded to and fro along dimly lighted corridors, but for the most part the ship was quiet. Down and still farther down he went, and found his own cabin, and Edith in it, a crumpled letter in her hand, and her eyes wet. He gazed at her with profound displeasure.

At noon he looked curiously about the dining room, but saw no people to interest him. There

were either such families as his, with younger Ediths and Peters, or older and detached folk intent upon themselves. Peter, thinking of nothing better to do, ordered a great deal, and ate it with a fine sense of luxury. Then he went indolently to his deck chair with a book, and wrapped a rug about his feet. By tea time he was seasick.

He was seasick two nights and one day, and his misery might be measured by his sitting wretched and unshaven in his deck chair, a woeful and discouraging sight, and caring not a fig that the whole world saw him so. But on the morning of the third day he awoke hungry and hollow, and after fortifying himself with strong coffee, strode briskly out of doors and took his place with seamen.

There was nothing to do but read and lie in the sun; ocean and sky combined to give him over to dreaming, of nothing in particular, often of nothing but the warm content of his body. He was surprised at the interest intelligent-looking men took in his sister, and watched her with them, but could find no new attractiveness about her, and was rather inclined to consider her perfidious, remembering the unpleasant sight he had witnessed in the cabin. But Peter is not to be blamed, for the growth of a sister is an amazing thing; for a long while she will be an awkward hoyden, scornful of everything but games, and then all at once, Pouf, she is a grown woman with tastes and hidden cavaliers and long experience in love.

But Peter did not know that such was the way of all sisters, and thought Edith a wretch. He was preparing to lay the case before his mother, and demand a show of maternal authority, when he fell of a sudden in love himself, or very like it, with a slim, tawny-haired woman whom he glimpsed across the dining hall, and who passed his chair with long strides, on solitary walks about the deck. Peter, watching her, was aware of a growing feeling of breathlessness as though where his insides had been there were a flocculent precipitate; thereby he knew that he was in love, and took at last to striding the deck as well, alternately audacious and faint, wondering why no one else hunted her, despairing of ever meeting her. He could not help fearing that his suit was overbold, yet followed her none the less resolutely, until she did speak to him at last, and walked with him, too, for a full morning.

Then began a wooing, shy and enraptured on Peter's side, half amused and wilful on hers. But that it was a wooing sufficed for Peter. Familiar things blossomed into all manner of significance: the play of dolphins, as the two stood facing the gale singing over the bows, with the sun pouring down on the sea; the calm windless corners of the ship where they sat close together and spoke in low voices of themselves; the hushed halls and rooms below stairs where he sought for her face among people, with a strange excitement in his body. He swung with her around the cir-

cuit of the decks, arm in arm, and thrilled at the soft press of her coat. An enchantment bewildered his life, until he was hardly conscious of the days and nights, and the ocean below and the sky above were like the background of an orchestra to a pantomime. And the woman? Who shall say?

But this much is so, that upon a night of dancing, with music coming faintly from the promenade, they climbed together to the hurricane deck, and stood side by side, facing the low golden moon, and the windy sweep of stars over the dark night sky. The water gleamed gold and was lost below them; and the fragrance of the woman stole through the wind and was one with the night. The ship pulsed on through the darkness, rising and falling in a faint crashing of white foam. And there, upon a peak above the level plain of the world, with only the black rigging sounding above them, Peter kissed the woman, and she clung to him. They stumbled down the companionway at last, in a dream, and in a shadow they kissed each other good night. Until dawn Peter sat gazing across the seas with wide and unseeing eyes, staring at the wonder and the profound beauty of life. At daybreak he crept to his berth above his long slumbering father, and when he awoke late the next morning, the dim-lying coast of Portugal was looming on the horizon, and the ship rising to a running sea.

The woman he saw again across the vista of

breakfast tables, and his heart leaped at the appeal in her eyes. And that was all, for she did not come on deck that day, and when they dropped anchor in the quiet bay at Gibraltar, with the dark rock looming sternly through the dusk beyond the fleet of fisher boats, she left the steamer, and Peter never saw her again.

But it was she who gave Peter a meaning in Europe, filling it for him with the past, with romance and chivalry, heroes and troubadours, giving life to legends and ballades, haunting the silent Mediterranean, the gaunt and sombre coast of Spain, and all the towns of Italy and France. Peter would not go with his family through the churches and museums, but wandered among the streets, dreaming of the woman, imagining her with him, making of Europe, indeed, little more than a setting for this newly awakened life in him, that bade fair to lull his student life entirely asleep.

David was quick to sense the change, and wrote him a long letter.

"I know, Peter," he wrote, "how fair your lady must have been. I have been devoured with the curse of the black god, sitting beneath tall pines and coming nowhere, writing the most unsatisfactory music, wondering, wondering, among these mountains, and biting at the very futility of myself, while you go wandering through old cities. But you must certainly include the churches, Peter."

Peter wrote back from Interlaken whimsically.

"My progress is far from romantic, musician. I rather imagine that your days are more so, in the dark pines. We travel as cheaply as we can, of course, and there's the devil's own bother about it. Father argues a great deal with porters and guards, and though they never understand him, it gives him a tremendous satisfaction, and he looks splendid, fairly beaming. Mother takes a sort of pride in him, and settles back complacently when he starts in. But somehow the sandwiches and the oranges, and the bustle and the curiosity spoil the landscapes, although I know I'm an ungrateful cub to say it. I should like to go through Europe as the hero of an adventure, to meet the woman at the other end of it, not this way. Father's little battles and victories smack of the tourist. But I'm fearfully afraid to let him see that, for it's his one vacation, and God knows he deserves it. Mother is as curious as a child, while I think that Edith peoples Europe with counts and marquises."

Peter liked best to be alone; he thought to see the tawny woman come down every street to meet him, although she never came, and he knew that she would not. But to be with people broke the spell; he was no hero, save when he was alone. With his family about him he was a young nobody, but if he stole off by himself, and if it was evening in Italy, or dusk in France, why, he was a very different person, at peace with the

serene country, at one with the people, his heart deep among the loves of the dead nobles, his ears tuned to the footsteps of a wraith, his one love. So he travelled through the mountain towns of Italy, in a sort of melancholy exultation, his body crying out for her, yet resigned to her loss. Through Italy, France, and Switzerland, tranced and saddened, yet well content, as much by himself as he could be, doing nothing, thinking of nothing more. His father and mother thought him ridiculous, as no doubt he was, but his mother, unlike her husband, felt that she did not quite understand Peter, and that it might be best to let him be. But when he flatly refused to climb the Jungfrau with them in a funicular, she very nearly lost her patience.

As for Peter, the distant huge mountain crowding the sky even far as it was, sheer white against the clear blue, mysteriously shadowed and still, he felt would not brook his clumsy interference. To travel upon its face, laughing and impudent, would not only have been ribald, but it would have shattered its glory as well, and Peter was jealous of the glory of Europe, invested as it was with the curiously distant tale of a man, Peter, and a woman, together upon the topmost deck of a ship.

From Switzerland the Kindreds went directly to Paris and lodged in a small hotel off the Champs Elysées, fragrant with faded things. There was instituted a week spent bravely among the shops, while Peter and his father discovered,

the one, Paris, and the other, the museums, palaces and galleries. Peter went perforce to Versailles, but through no desire to see it. He explored the boulevards as he would have explored a new land, adventurously, intent upon the people, sitting now and then at some small round table before a café, sipping grenadine or chocolate, rambling aimlessly among the streets, staring into shop windows, and into the faces of women as they passed. He spent some time among the book stalls along the Seine, buying nothing, but watching the gray river and the gray city across from him, feeling the undercurrent of kindly life in the voices, the noises, the hushes of the streets. It was a city old with content. At night when the boulevards broke into a foam of light, Paris drew him willy nilly out of his hotel, to the despair and terror of his mother, to wander among crowds, alert and inquisitive. The low laughter of the folk, the passion and the wickedness, naïve and light-hearted and caressing, unlike the shrill night life of America, aroused in him the desire to become a part of it, and on such occasions he very nearly forgot his own love, and half hungered to be joyously bad, and to delve into lewd fable. But there was nothing about Peter to attract the women of the streets, for he was brown as any Norman, and had at most only a meager handful of small coins to jingle. Often at night he drove home through a dark, whispering Paris, peering up at the shuttered houses from his fiacre, won-

dering what tales they guarded, of what lovers and husbands and mistresses. There was a spice of leaves and old trees through all Paris, of flowers growing, and a faint fragrance, as though the city herself were feminine, and the streets were women.

In the yellow morning sunlight the shadow-dappled avenues drew Peter out again. For what countess might not run plump into his arms? And even the tawny woman herself might come walking to meet him. Yet he fell in with no happening at all, but watched the children roll their hoops in the Bois, and stood in a dream before the ponderous iron gates of palaces that had housed the great nobles.

For all the dreaming, there was stirring in him the old unrest. Peter had almost had his fill of romance, and his drugged spirit was beginning to assert itself. In his last letter to David before he sailed, he wrote:

“The memory of the woman is fading a bit, although I think that it will always be there, an echo of some impossible happening. But I am wondering again. Europe is so at peace with itself, so old and serene, so calmly certain, that I almost fell asleep. And here life is more content than anywhere I have seen it, content with the sun, with love, with the devil knows what. I am unsettled, even more so than last year. Last year? A thousand years ago. The woman did that, I think, sang to me and worried me. But can there be

something deeper here that I have overlooked? In Switzerland, in the Alps perhaps, something I might have caught if I had been alone, but not in Paris.

"Father and mother will never forgive me for leaving them so alone all summer, but we are different people. The foreign means to them geography and architecture, and all the open expression of another people's life. But to me it means the strange fashion of living and thinking and loving, though I'm ashamed to say that. David, I've grown sentimental. . . . Oh, well, I'll talk awhile to Frank, and let you laugh at me, and I'll get over it well enough."

Back across the ocean memory travelled with Peter, keeping him silent in his chair, and lonely in his promenades. His greeting to the sea was as to a friend of some standing, who shared a great secret with him, but who would be decently quiet about it.

He returned to America with the same unexpected thrill of patriotism with which he had left it, and found an unusual beauty in his first sight of the flag, the statue, and the towering crags of office buildings between himself and the sun. His family crowded to the rail, along with the whole boat full, as though they were adventurers returned from the moon, beside themselves with excitement, waving to their relatives. Tugs whistled, the ship swung slowly in, high above the wharf, the band played, and Peter descended

grandly to his native land. Then came a fussy waiting to come through the customs, a rushing here and there, lost trunks, packing and unpacking while people wove in and about him in the dim yellow gas light; the long, labored trip up-town in the roaring tunnels underneath the city, and home at last, to rest and rest, to handle familiar things, to sit in familiar places, a peaceful sense of finality, of order again and ease, the comfortable rut.

To the sophomore Harvard gave a benign welcome after he had come across the morning-sunny Charles. The Square, the curve of the Yard wall, slender and iron, heavy with trees and bushes, the small and contented shops, even the level car tracks along Massachusetts Avenue were intimate to him, and so were the shadowed side streets and the little sandwich house on his own street, where he went for breakfast, just as he had often done. Indeed, the thing that gave him the most satisfaction of all was that he knew at once where to go for his breakfast, and that he did not eat in a strange place.

Peter's room looked desolate, as though it had been lonely during the summer. He dropped his bag and stared about him, drinking in the aroma of his old life. He walked to his window and looked out at the street, across at the yellow Institute, and, turning back into his room again, idly arranged a weatherbeaten blotter on his dusty

desk. The room smelled of the deserted summer, and faintly through it, the spring and the winter and the fall of the year before, of books and tobacco and his dilapidated morris chair. He could not think of how to begin. He went out to knock at Frank's door, but there was no answer. He hurried down the street to David's room, but it was empty and hollow to his knocking. So he went slowly back to his room, and unpacked his bag, and when his trunk came, unpacked that as well, and wandered upon Massachusetts Avenue, greeting a few men casually, looking at the shops, and renewing relations with their proprietors, marking time with his year.

But by dusk David had come. Peter, turning into David's house, heard his piano, and raced up the stairs three at a time. David was sitting with his back to him, playing the largest chords his hands could cover, his valises dropped at his feet, his hat and coat still on him. Peter stood in the doorway, laughing with pure happiness, until David, between two mighty chords, heard him and turned, his hands suspended in the air, and jumped to his feet. And there they stood, full to overflowing with their past life together, with more to say to each other than they could possibly tell, deeply and jubilantly touched to be again together, wringing each other's hands, patting each other's elbows, and grinning as sheepishly as men do.

That night they caroused in Boston, arm in arm,

fortifying themselves with beer against the damp night air from the sea, and ending up nobly at the Touraine with music and wine, a Burgundy that David had discovered during the summer, and which he ordered in a very important way. At Cambridge again they sat a long while in Peter's room, sleepy and content, almost expecting to see the ghosts of their younger selves sitting with them, and Peter told David about the woman and about Europe, and about Paris, and about his summer and himself, while David, hunched in a corner over a pipe, regarded Peter slumbrously from a great distance, out of an owlish wisdom and a vast experience.

At eight the next morning the house rocked, and Peter awoke to hear his door slam, to hear a cyclone pass through his room, and to find himself suddenly bereft of his covers, blinking on the floor. A voice boomed above him, and he sprang up with a sleepy cry. Frank had arrived, David was in Cambridge; college had opened, his sophomore year had swung into full stride.

It turned out that David had been at his music during the summer, and had written the first movement of a sonata, and three songs. Peter heard them, and was excited at them, not so much, perhaps, for the music, as that David had written them. For Peter was no critic; he was awed at any sweep of wings. David sent his songs to Schirmer, more from Peter's urging than from a

pride in them, knowing well that he had done no very good work.

With the opening of the term Peter began to consider his courses, and elected economics as much from a sense of duty as anything else. At first he was dissatisfied with it, and found it hard to follow the abrupt professor. Eventually the disconcerting generalities dwindled away, and with more definite information to work at, Peter grew interested. David, however, would have none of it, but joined Peter in a course of Indic philosophy.

Once more a pleasant drift of hours claimed Peter, somnolent mornings in the droning class rooms, vagrant afternoons, slanting with sun; tea, and the gathering chill of late autumn, evening, the quiet blue streets, and clear yellow lights in the Square. He went on frequent walks, most often with David, and sometimes with Frank, through Belmont and Waverly, up and down country roads, along old ivy grown and crumbled stone walls. Frank, smoking a heavy briar pipe, walked with long strides, thoughtfully, in a manner as though he were at rest with his environment, satisfied with the years of Cambridge behind him, and from a decided point of view were facing life steadily. Or, so, at least, it seemed to Peter, trudging along beside him, or sitting below him on a wall, his knees huddled under his chin, his fingers laced about his shins.

"I've never found anything very sad about

autumn, Frank," he said at one time, "but it isn't because the leaves are red. The witches must get into me at Hallowe'en, for they light unholy fires in me, until I'm fairly ashamed of myself."

"I know," Frank said, "and the devil of it is you never know what it's all about. I used to find autumn sad, my second year. Now it's the spring. Somehow, autumn gives me a push; it's as though the year said, 'Here, I'm not going to look for a while. See what you can do.' And then it covers up its head in the blanket and goes to sleep, and there's my work all ready for me, and no one to ask even to see it for four months. Then spring comes along and asks in a sort of drowsy voice, 'Gosh, is *that* all you've done?'"

"H-mmmm. And yet, if you could show the spring something——"

"If you could. But even so, I think that spring would belittle it. The gray sky and the bare, brown earth, and the wind and the snow give man an impetus to work. Work seems to be the big thing at that time. But spring . . . well, that's different. It may be because earth grows erotic, and lets the sun seduce her."

"But what a thought!"

"Quite seriously. I don't know that we are so far removed from the earth that our bodies shouldn't be affected by the seasons. But it's a good thought anyhow, and it would explain the tradition of June marriages. Shall we go on?"

They climbed down from the wall and walked back toward Cambridge. From a hill they caught a glimpse of the tower of Memorial standing a dull brick above the bare branches of trees, with a glimmer of blue slate, the blue roofs of dormitories, the gray-white Stadium and the winding Charles gleaming between its banks. Frank took his pipe out of his mouth, and pointed with the wet, black stem.

"All that," he said, "you'll have next year, when I'm gone, and generations will have it after you, when you're gone. But there's nothing in *me* that will last. I wish I could do one thing that would be me after I have died. I wouldn't mind if I were going somewhere else, because then I'd take all that was me wherever I was going. . . ."

Yet, as they went on together through the autumn afternoon, Peter thought of what Frank had said and the words troubled him. For he, too, would go down in his time, and leave Cambridge behind him, and later, more than Cambridge, all his years; and Peter, too, had a great longing and a need to build.

To build what? But that would be an answer.

David's songs were rejected, and for a while he hid himself in his room, although he had had no faith in them himself. When Peter saw him again, it was at supper across the long table in Memorial, with the lofty and sombre arch of the roof above them, and the subdued clatter and murmur of a

thousand students all about. David was sitting below him, but Peter waited until his friend was done, and then walked down the sounding hall after him, between the long white tables. Coming down the steps, with the night cold and snowy before them, he took David's arm, and the two men walked together across the Yard again, down Holyoke, and up Peter's old stairs. And David told Peter he had taken a class in the slums, under Wiener.

"Oh, my music, . . ." he growled to Peter, "my music . . . isn't music. Bother with it. This is real, at any rate."

"I'm not at all sure that it's real," said Peter.

"It's all very well for you to say so," David cried, "with all Harvard before you. You'll manage something yet, you know, and be an Institute man."

"In the first place," Peter said calmly, "they have no use for me. I have no honors, I'm not here for honors, David, of that sort. I want to know why men work and live, and why they love and fight, and how I had best do all that. I'll not find it, tagging about with settled heroes and falling asleep . . . I want to know just what it means to be a gentleman."

"Wiener says——" David began.

"Ah," Peter broke in quickly, "I won't find it in the slums."

"Where then?" grumbled David.

Peter shrugged his shoulders.

"There's a man here from Leland Stanford—a chap named Don Mark—who thinks I'll find it in Carver."

"What on earth," asked David, "is Carver?"

"Why," said Peter, "I don't really know. But as far as I can make out, Carver is a teacher at college, with a sort of message, and a crowd of apostles."

"Here," cried David, "at Harvard?"

"Yes."

"I don't believe it," said David.

"It is queer," said Peter, "isn't it?"

"Still," he added, "this westerner came all the way from Stanford to study with him. So he can't be a . . . a fabulous monster, can he?"

Sunday in Cambridge is a tone poem in dejection. There is in it something of an old beer bottle, righteously empty, and wise men stay indoors and read the colored supplements. Across the whole countryside are church bells ringing, ministers preaching, chickens roasting, men and women parading in starched ruffles, little children with their ears washed. As a result the sky is sleepy and far away, and wise men, looking out of their windows, wish themselves somewhere else too, at Marblehead, perhaps, along the rocky coast with the gray sea stretched before them, and the fish of the sea, among whom there is no Sunday, nor any church bells either, nor any ears to wash. As Don Mark described it to Peter, on Sun-

day men cease production, and squirm all day under the heavy realization that everyone else has done the same thing, and that the earth, or at any rate, their portion of the earth, is coasting largely through space, with no one doing anything. But Peter thought of the pleasure of going late to bed Saturday night, and lying abed Sunday morning beyond the ordinary time, and disagreed strongly with Don Mark's theory.

"Nonsense," said the westerner. "By three o'clock of a Sunday afternoon, the world goes calling. Do you like that? Does any man? Don't tell me. I've done it. The world goes calling, and jolly well wishes it were dead."

Peter and Frank and Don Mark had eaten their Sunday dinner together at the Green Lantern, and after complimenting Mrs. Prentiss upon her maid Susan and the chicken, and Susan upon her mistress Mrs. Prentiss and the chocolate pudding, Peter and Don had wandered out Brattle Street, and Frank had gone home to dress for a visit to his aunt at the Hotel Puritan.

Peter was surprised to find the westerner inclined to like him. He was always surprised at friendliness, never expected it, rarely found it, yet always looked for it. When it was offered, he took all of it at once; he plunged into affection like a child.

They came back again past Radcliffe. It was Don Mark's first sight of that college, and he was accusing.

"But look here," he said, "it's not a bad place at all."

Peter shook his head absently.

"Well, then," Don Mark said, "what's the matter with it?"

Peter considered. To be truthful, he knew of nothing at all the matter with it.

"Oh," he said finally, "it has no Yard, and the girls wear spectacles and big shoes with low heels."

The westerner smiled. "I always heard that Radcliffe was well thought of in the east," he said.

"I guess it is," Peter agreed.

"High scholarship and all that," Don Mark went on.

"Yes."

"You think it lacks something?"

"The emotional appeal, perhaps."

"Oh!" and Don Mark began to laugh.

"To tell you the honest truth," said Peter, "I don't believe I've ever thought of it in any other way. It's an heritage from Exeter, where Wellesley girls used to come to our Andover games, attached to some lucky fellow. They were a bit different from the Radcliffe women you see chewing their chocolate at the Merle."

"What a rake you are. With a moon and a woman and water and lanterns and things, wouldn't you make as fearful an ass of yourself as the best of them."

Peter colored and did not answer. Don Mark chuckled.

“I’d rather have a woman chewing her chocolate across the breakfast table,” he said. “It sounds poor; but it’s healthy.”

CHAPTER IV

MONDAY morning there was a letter from Peter's father.

"My dear Peter," he wrote, "I am sorry to say that your mother is not feeling well. The doctor thinks it is nothing serious, so there is no need to worry, but that will explain why she has not written you. . . .

"What you say about your books displeases me very much. It is very nice to have a library, I know, but I am not at all a wealthy man, and you have no right to be so extravagant, seeing as how it was a great sacrifice to your mother and to me to send you to college at all, and if you cannot get along on your allowance, you will have to come home.

"I am very much disappointed in your work, you seem to be stuffing your head full of useless twaddle. I am not working night and day to fill your head full of nonsense. I think it is time that you woke up, and began to look around you a bit. If college is just an excuse for you to buy books and have a good time and spend all you can get out of me, you'd better come home right away.

"Edith was at a dance last night and enjoyed herself very much. You will be interested to know that young Smith whom you may remember to have met here, is doing fine work in his uncle's business, and has just been promoted. Your Aunt Hester was here for dinner last night, and we spent an enjoyable evening afterwards at bridge, Mr. and Mrs. Ellensbogle coming in. Tomorrow night we are to hear Alfred Noyes speak, and I am sure it will be both instructive and entertaining.

"Your mother and sister join me in sending you our love,

"Yr. affect.

"Father."

To that Peter rose in hot rebellion, and cut his nine o'clock class to write an answer. He did not mail it at once, however, and spent the entire day wondering whether to send it at all. When he re-read the answer at night, he tore it up. . . . It didn't seem to be the right thing. In his father's position he caught a hint of strength, of the somewhat pathetic power of fact. But it was a pathos and fact that he had little use for then, and, indeed, he hardly understood it. He thought that his father was very unintelligent, and that it was too bad. A hot-headed youthfulness possessed him, and he said a private bah to the man Smith who had not known so many things, who had not known the austere friendliness of Harvard, the dusty windows of Peter's room, brimmed with

sun, the pride of stout-backed books, the man Smith, who had no belief, and had not heard of Carver.

For Peter was considering Carverism. It had been vaguely explained to him as the religion of construction, the religion whose immortality lay in no doubtful heaven, but in the life of the race, its children and their children, whose essence was production and production that the race might live, might grow greater and stronger, and still production. "What are you worth to the group?" said Carver, and Peter rather liked that, and flung it tentatively at the man Smith and at his father. In his impetuous youth it seemed to him that no answer came back.

For the young are incapable of compromise with defeat, and cannot understand it. Peter listened among men for sturdy beliefs heroically set forth, and if men were mute and woebegone, why then they had no beliefs. And men without beliefs were miserable. It was not enough that men with battered faith should build up their faith again and add the compromise and the doubt experience had taught and go more grimly and more quietly each down his road. No . . . a man's faith must go riding before him, or he had none.

Carver, at any rate, spoke sturdily. "Labor," he said, "and build. Produce for the group, for the strength of the group. Or what good are you?"

So much Peter understood. . . .

The letter filled Peter with alarm but no thought of action. Indeed, he would not have been able to do other than he was doing, even if he had been confronted with the necessity of immediately preparing to make his own way; he could have thought of nothing more helpful than a little study in the same divergent fields, walks and discussions, afternoons in Cambridge, some evenings in Boston. But after all, college ought not to mean much more than that, a place for ripening in the sun; and it is only in this headstrong America that we expect the college graduate to be completely equipped for the struggle, and it is only in America that he is not.

The feeling of dependence upon his father would not let Peter be; he could not shake it off, and it gave a bitter flavor to his purchases, and destroyed his pride in his belongings. For a while he tried to discover some means of earning money himself, but he had no idea of how to go about it, and he was soon baffled. He could think of nothing that he could do, and no one else could think of anything for him, either; the business side of Boston was as remote to him as Ethiopia. He made a faint-hearted attempt to procure some tutoring, but since he was only a sophomore, and had no reputation as a scholar, he failed in that, and since his effort did not go as far as to cause him to apply for so honest a job as waiter or furnace man, there was nothing to do but accept his allowance, study a bit harder, and hope for a

larger scholarship and perhaps a prize in June.

It was in this state of mind that he came into his room one December night, and found David sprawled in a chair. David's cheeks were red, but otherwise there was nothing unusual about him.

"Hello, there," Peter said, "any news?"

"Mmbleumle," David muttered, and Peter stared at him. David lifted lack-lustre eyes and looked back at Peter. Then he smiled childishly.

"I got a great piece inf'mashun, a great piece inf'mashun," he said in a drunken voice. "I got a great piece . . . I'm drunk, Peter!" he shouted, "I'm drunk, Peter, you old hell hound, drunk, Peter, d-w-x-v-r-n-k drunk!" He stopped a moment to gather breath, and then burst into loud, hollow laughter, half doubled over in his chair.

"So I see," said Peter sharply, half thinking it a hoax, uncertain whether to laugh or to be angry, wondering what to believe.

"Wheel!" cried David, staggering to his feet, and lurched across the room to Peter. He put his arms around Peter's neck and let his body sag.

"Good old Peter," he said several times. "I'm drunk, Peter." Then, suddenly changing his tone, he became melancholy and confidential.

"You'll nev' know, Peter, nev' know. Poor lil David. Poor lil Peter."

"Never know what, you confounded ass!" cried Peter.

"Nev' know, Peter, poor lil David, drunk. Good old Peter. C'm on, dance, good old Peter."

He essayed a clumsy breakdown, but Peter pushed him away, and he went reeling. Ending up somewhere near the door he turned and sprawled out of it, and half fell downstairs, mumbling to himself. With considerable difficulty he found the doorknob, and charged out into the street, where he went lurching off toward the Square.

Peter, standing in consternation in the middle of his room, was swept alternately by sheer amazement at such a thing, by anger, by disgust, and finally by laughter. Then he became penitent and ashamed of his own thoughtless part in the business, and worried that David would meet with some trouble on his way home. He hurried downstairs and out into the street. David was not to be seen, nor was he in the Square, but Peter found the windows of his room lighted, so he guessed that David had come safely home, and returned slowly to his own rooms, wondering what it was all about, and resolved to have a very plain talk with David on the morrow.

But on the morrow that gentleman was disinclined to discuss the matter. He was grumpy and vague, and after admitting that he was sorry, he was anxious to drop the whole thing. Peter came away wondering if things had gone wrong with David, and what might have happened. David, he thought, seemed to be breaking up rather badly,

almost as though he were trying to come to grips with something and couldn't.

But he had no chance to talk to him about it, for he didn't see him again for several days, and when David did come carelessly into his room again, it was more the David of old, so there was no way of broaching the subject.

Peter's sunny room commended itself to Don Mark, and so did Peter. There was in both the room and in Peter a quiet acceptance of his presence that he found exceedingly pleasant; it was a spot where his own tempestuous convictions might be aired and listened to with the proper contemplation, and a man ready to listen at any time, incapable of argument, but worth while winning over to a cause, for a certain quaint seriousness about him. He took to dropping in on Peter at odd times, between lectures, or late at night, often to sit silently smoking while Peter worked at his desk. Sometimes Peter, coming home from Boston, found him there, and the sight of the fair-haired westerner waiting his return gave him a warm and stirring feeling of being well befriended, and then he bustled about hospitably, to Don's half grateful amusement.

Often Frank stormed in from the welter of his room, and waged philosophical battles with Don, while Peter curled up into a ball on the couch and smoked and dreamed. Then he was half sneakingly glad that David was not there; somehow,

David had no place in the scene, David, with his own personal conclusions, was out of place, dwarfed, unimportant among philosophies. David was not an *ist* or an *ite*, he was just David, with feelings, illogical, unreflective. Peter probably never reasoned all that out by himself, but half sensed it. He was caught up in admiration for knowledge, for criticism, authoritative and severe, and above all, correct. David would not be correct, would not be authoritative, and David, too, would not be content to sit silently listening.

Against the Carverism of Don Mark, Frank advanced the tenets of Pragmatism and their good humored but heated discussions reverberated through the house until it shook. Frank would never admit the glory of stamping a man anything or for any end but himself.

"Piffle and shucks!" Don cried more than once, "if you make a single man his own end, in a very short time there'll be no men. And there you've defeated yourself."

"On the other hand," Frank shouted, "you have no right to hypothecate a will to live at all. If I want more to eat opium than live, why should I live?"

"In order to eat opium, if for nothing else!" Don cried. "But if you did eat opium and died, I'd still be alive—doing what I wanted to. So who'd be better off? You wouldn't be eating opium, you know, you'd be dead."

Frank laughed with a great show of scorn. "And if I preferred to die?" he asked.

"Hum. Well . . . Then you'd die. And your blooming philosophy would die with you. So I don't see where . . ."

"You haven't said a thing. Why, it is better to live if you want . . ."

"You forget one thing . . ."

"You have to explain to me . . ."

". . . Competition would naturally force . . ."

". . . Each man attend to his own . . ."

"Bosh!"

"Fiddle sticks!"

Silence.

Peter rarely entered into the arguments that raged between Don and Frank, but leaned back in his chair, absorbing the color and the tenor of the discussions, with a contented feeling that they were important, and that he was listening. He heard a great talk of Carver and James and Santayana, not very much that he understood, but a good deal that aroused his curiosity. Yet just what Pragmatism amounted to from a practical point of view, no one seemed able to tell him, and he was equally at sea about Carver. He could get no nearer to either than the belief that they were both attitudes toward life, to be slowly digested the one or the other, and then allowed to color things as they would, and to give different meanings to things according to their various states of digestion. Peter guessed shrewdly that

no two Pragmatists were more alike than any two members of the same family were apt to be, and that Carver was the same affair, a digested attitude, affecting various people differently. What Peter did not quite know was that neither the one nor the other could be administered like a large, sudden capsule, but that both needed a gradual nibbling.

But there was something very satisfying about Carver.

With the winter Peter began to move in wider social circles, due as much to Frank and Don Mark as to the fact that he was not seen so often with David. Frank spoke of it to Don, as the two stood at a window of Frank's room, watching the morning street. Peter and David went by, walking together and talking. Frank shook his head and tapped his fingers on the glass impatiently.

"I wish Kindred would leave that chap alone," he said.

Don looked reflective. "Why?" he asked. "There's nothing particularly wrong with him?"

"No. But he's spoiling Harvard for Peter."

"So?"

"It hurts Peter to be seen around with him."

"Because he's a Jew?"

"Yes, rather. And because he's not a particularly pleasant fellow. A bit hysterical . . . impatient . . . restless . . . bitter. I always feel that he might burst out quite nastily at any mo-

ment. Oh, I'm not down on Jews as a race. There's something . . . a rather pathetic and wistful sweetness about Jewish women . . . some Jewish women. And some Jewish men have a lot of fire. But this chap David doesn't seem to have found himself . . . a bit volcanic still, and grumbling. Too eager. And then, of course, he's a Jew, and Peter simply can't take him around with him, Don, because the men who might like Peter, don't like Jews. I don't blame them . . . they've been brought up that way. As for me, I dislike the man. He doesn't seem to want to trust anybody."

"I *do* blame those fellows you mentioned," said Don. "There may be a lot of good stuff in David. Why, Peter himself is no intellectual giant, old Frank."

"No, but Peter is a dear lad. You must admit that, Don."

"I wouldn't call anybody a dear lad. Not in a thousand years."

"I suppose in your silly system you'd have numbers to describe a man. For instance, so and so, slightly eggy, series *III*, No. 1756. So and so, malty, series *X* . . ."

"Well, at any rate I wouldn't have a country full of dope fiends and suicide clubs competing . . ."

"Yah! You admitted yourself the other night that everybody would die and that there'd be no competition."

"But I was thinking of this, Frank. Seriously, don't be absurd. You can't live without competition. Why, even the Pragmatists would be competing among themselves for the chance . . ."

I do not believe that Peter realized even faintly that his waning intimacy with David was widening his social life in college; if he had, he would probably have haunted David out of pure pride and stubbornness. Nevertheless, he did not miss David very much, and made hardly more than a half-hearted effort to see him. David, in his moodiness, exaggerated Peter's carelessness and made it even harder, as a result, for them to meet as they used to. He felt, unjustly, that Peter was ashamed of him; he knew that Frank and Don were not glad to see him, and believed that Peter had been influenced by them. Although he would not blame Peter, he adopted a general sense of injury that Peter did not like at all, and could not understand.

During the Christmas holidays Frank spent a night with Peter in New York, much to the excitement of Edith and his mother, and to his father's half proud satisfaction, for, poor soul, Frank, at any rate, was a tangible evidence of his sacrifice to give Peter a college education, and a deal more satisfaction than a long bill for books. Peter was half apologetic for his parents, and wholly for his home, but Frank caused him to feel ashamed of himself by enjoying everything hugely, and dropping his belongings familiarly everywhere.

Cambridge, cold and snowy, blinked with sun at him as he came out of the subway. The Square was at the edge of Alaska or Labrador; beyond it stretched the white country, the pines, silence, and the winter sky. Or so it seemed to Peter. He smiled at the Yard and at the gray and red houses across from it, as though it all were home, and he, a returning prodigal delighted to see everything where it was when he left. He went in to Jimmie's for breakfast, to Jimmie's where there were probably the most succulent eggs to be had in all North America, and exchanged greetings with four men. Only the elite ate at Jimmie's, and it gave Peter a deal of satisfaction. It was a small place and Jimmie made it his business to know the names of all the worth while customers. I say Jimmie but I really mean Austin, for he was the most important man behind the counter; to him you gave your order, and he called it back to a farther angle of the counter where sandwiches were made. It was Austin who boiled your eggs in a machine which slid up and down and ticked, and Austin who prepared your coffee. As I said, he knew the names of all the worth while customers, and if he failed to remember you toward the close of your freshman year, you grew tired of Jimmie's. Austin was a bit suspicious of Peter, but bowed to him, and had trusted him once or twice. So Peter patronized Jimmie's and let his eggs tick for three minutes and a half exactly. Heigh-ho . . .

Peter did not find all Harvard patterned after either Frank or Don Mark. Often he came into Frank's room to find it in the possession of men of many clubs, making a great low-hung fog of smoke of their cigarettes. The talk was always lively, and interspersed with laughter, but curiously personal and slight, made up of happenings and opinions, gossip of Cambridge and Boston, discussion of courses, of motors, stories of various women. They were inclined to accept Peter if he remained unobtrusive and asked no questions, and, indeed, he was only too glad to do that, for they were singularly careless and untroubled men, and to Peter they seemed to be wandering in a dream, along old paths, almost without effort.

He went on one party with Frank in the *demi monde*, and sat at a table silently beside a thin-lipped, bony-nosed woman in a low-cut bodice. He sat nervously fingering his glass of Rhine wine and seltzer, and trying to think of what men had spoken of on like parties in the stories he had read. After a certain amount of silence and uninteresting conversation the bony-nosed lady directed her attention to the man at her other side, and indulged in a patter of pleasantries with him, while Peter sat and listened and wondered how it could flow on with so little effort, all about nothing. Afterwards he left the party and went home, taking a deep gulp of fresh air as he came down the steps of the café, and then waited unconscion-

ably for Frank to come home at a wee hour and delight him with a tale of wickedness.

After mid years Frank took him to a tea in Boston, and took Don Mark along as well, a tea in the great world. Don made a great fuss about it, and objected as hard as he was able, but Frank overwhelmed him by sheer force of insistence, and Peter was so curious and so anxious for Don to go along, to keep him company if for nothing else, that the westerner gave in at last and went, grumbling loudly.

To Peter's dismay, Frank led them up the steps of a broad-windowed brownstone house on Beacon Street, and a butler opened the door. Peter slipped out of his coat, and stood meekly near Don, fingering his chin and his tie, tremendously glad that he wasn't alone. Finally Frank went on up the thickly carpeted stairway, with Don striding defiantly behind him, and Peter bringing up the craven rear.

There was a certain flutter of introductions in a room patterned idly in deep tones and peoples' faces, in the colors of women's frocks, warmth, movement, and an odor of delicate perfume, the scent of furs, and flowers, the hum of voices. Peter, moving from the doorway past the outermost circle of it, became absorbed in the pattern of colors and voices. He saw the faces of Harvard men here and there, club men, some of whom he knew, some famous names he had heard of, faces he passed on the coast sometimes. He had

a confused sense of women, fat ones and thin ones. Finally he found himself in a corner with Don Mark, watching the pattern again. A tall, slim, haughty woman passed them, and looked at Peter with dark, heavily lashed eyes. Peter gulped. "Ooh," he said to Don.

His friend sniffed. "Did you like that?" he asked. Peter nodded.

"Well," said Don judicially, "she's no find of yours. Her name is something or other Peawinkle and they say that she's the most beautiful woman in Boston. Frank says so, anyhow."

Peter nodded, as though to say that he could well understand it. Don shrugged his shoulders.

"What does she do with it?" he asked.

"With what?"

"Her good looks, of course. What else has she to do anything with?"

Peter laughed. "I don't know," he said, "I suppose she plays dolly with it."

"Well," said Don, "it's . . . it's conspicuous waste. . . . On the other hand, look there."

Peter's eyes followed the other's across the room, where a woman who had just come in was shaking hands with the hostess. She wore a fur-trimmed turban, and beneath it her eyes were owl-ishly encircled with tortoise-shell spectacles. Her cheeks were pink, as though she had just been walking, and her entire formless body, of medium build, expressed a vitality and a free swinging litheness that her loose tweed suit was unable

to conceal. She did not appear to have over much hair; what she had, of a reddish-brown tint, was drawn carefully up under her turban. Her thin ankles went suddenly into large, low-heeled shoes that were planted firmly on the floor, with the toes turned the least bit toward each other.

"Radcliffe," said Peter deliberately.

"Very probably. Now there, my dear Peter, is the sort of woman I could talk to."

They were joined by an acquaintance of Peter's, a man he had met once or twice during his freshman year, and whom he had since occasionally encountered on the street. In Cambridge the fellow, who was a vague but pleasant young man and an editor of the "Crimson," had often made it a careless point not to recognize Peter, but finding him in good company in Boston, he strolled over.

"Hello, Kindred," he said, "glad to see you around. Come here often?"

Peter, at a loss for words, said nothing, but colored faintly and smiled.

"Jolly crowd," murmured the man politely. Peter eagerly agreed, and after another silence introduced Don Mark, whose name for some reason seemed familiar to the "Crimson" editor. The two men shook hands, and Peter, in his pride in Don, recovered his self-possession. By that time the windows were blue with dusk, and near to them someone lighted a lamp. The pattern grew together again. A few people were leaving.

"Hit your exams all right?" the "Crimson" editor asked.

"Oh, yes," said Peter. "I had a little trouble with Indic Philosophy, but the rest were easy."

"Rattling good course, that Indic business. I had it last year. Silly stuff, isn't it. I wonder if those people believed all that about the egg and the circle and the rest of it. What do you think?"

"Hm. Well, of course . . ."

They were joined by a bored, dissipated-looking man in a dark cutaway, his long feet encased in gray spats. The editor turned to him.

"Hi, Babe."

"O Ronny."

"I say . . . the Peawinkle is as cool as ice, with the whole blooming Cambridge police force out hunting for poor old Lem. Perfectly marvelous—what?"

"Oh, very choice, very choice," said Babe. "The silly ass woke me up at three in the morning with his damn howling."

"Was that the racket I heard along Mount Auburn Street Monday night?" Peter asked.

"Very likely. The creature tanked himself tremendously in town, and when he couldn't see any more he nearly murdered a policeman, and drove his car all over Cambridge. So I guess you heard him. He woke up weeping in a garbage can."

"What had Miss Peawinkle to do with it?" Peter asked, and bit his lip an instant too late.

Babe looked at him coldly, and then let his eyes glance over the room. He turned to the other man.

"If you can get that little black-eyed vixen you had out last night, bring her along, and we'll take in the McGill game Saturday," he said.

"Perhaps I can," said the editor. "Whom you with?"

"I think I asked that Follies girl once when I was drunk, what's her name? She's jealous of your black-eyed girl. We might have a little fun, you know."

"Right O!" The two men moved away.

"I'm looking for McGill money," Babe was saying, "but you can't find any. I have an idea . . ."

Don and Peter were alone again. Across the room the woman with tortoise-shell glasses and ground-gripping shoes was taking her leave. Frank was moving toward them from a corner, where he had been all afternoon talking very earnestly to a laughing, blue-eyed woman. Peter was silently munching a cracker, looking at the floor. He was thinking of his own tawny woman, and that made him homesick.

He thought of Don's insistence that people make something of what they had been given, and smiled. It was rather splendid, and gave him an answer to Babe and Ronny and Jill, and he wanted one. And that was Carver, too.

Through March Peter was given over to the

digesting of Carver, that is, a Carver already digested by Don Mark, chewed into a palatable mush, but tasting, nevertheless, of Mark. For that matter, there was no other way to get it at all. Peter was ineligible to any class Carver conducted, and from the occasional lectures he attended with Don, he caught only production, production, production, and that needed translation. He captured a certain sense of immortal life and group power, life breeding life and fighting for an immortality of future generations, or at any rate, an immortality as long as the generations lasted. It put his family in a new light, and gave him a passing tolerance and affection for his father.

This digestion went on at all times, under all circumstances. With Don he plowed through the mud of late March, and rambled with him on fine days around the countryside, well buttoned and muffled to his ears. With Don he swung down Tremont Street at night, watching the drift of faces go by under the white yellow light, sniffing at the air to detect in its moistness an earnest of early spring. In Don's room and in his own, in Frank's room, at Jimmy's where he and Don sometimes ate a late breakfast, at Wirth's, at the Touraine where they sat occasionally late at night, leaning their elbows on the table, watching the people about them, talking desultorily of this and that—everywhere and at all times he was taking hold of a philosophy and an attitude that was

neither Carver nor Mark, and yet would be both. Often the intense earnestness of Don, overshooting its aim, amused him, sometimes it even provoked him to a mild asperity. Then the clamor of their discussion made waiters and neighbors uneasy until they had gone.

"No, sir," Don said decisively, "enjoyment for me doesn't sit up somewhere on a pink cloud, or for you either. It's a result; a result of work. I enjoy myself when I'm working, because I'm pushing somewhere. Do you remember when I asked you what the Peawinkle did with her beauty and you laughed? That was serious. If she does nothing with it, what satisfaction, what real satisfaction do you think it gives her?"

"Is it no satisfaction to be beautiful, and to have a million men flopping around at your feet?"

"No, no," said Don quickly. "It's not a real satisfaction at all, it's an excitation, an erotic titillation. Satisfaction means effort and accomplishment, production, a pride in something done. There's no satisfaction in love, Peter, no true satisfaction in it, just the flooding and draining of a nervous reservoir."

"But what is a woman to do with beauty? She might marry, I suppose, and have a lot of children."

"Ah," Don said. "Can you think of anything more natural for a woman to do? And then her beauty might be of some use."

"I suppose that if I were Frank," Peter

laughed, "I'd shout—but what if she doesn't want a baby?" "

"And if you were Frank," Don cried gaily, "I'd show you how in that case she and her beauty would be quite gone some fifty years before my wife's beauty had reached the third generation."

A waiter came silently with oysters and a lobster, and Don made a great business of swallowing the oysters, while Peter busied himself with the lobster, chewing it as hard as he could in the hope that it would thereby have less than the usual ill effect on him the next day.

With the beat of April rain on his dusty windows, and with the fog of lights at evening through the wet mist, the tawny woman sprang resurgent to his mind, and did battle there with Don Mark, with Carver, and with Peter's father. She it was who drove him again to the screen theaters, with a new unrest and yet with a new satisfaction, quieting his intellectual life with a delicious apathy. She caused him to take delight in screen romances, in heroes and heroines, in the fabulous business of kissing, and the screen pathos of renunciation. The women stirred him but not as before; they aroused in him a quiet dreaminess of some past happening in his own life, tenuous and sweet. He started to read a story by Chambers, and hid the book covertly away, fearful lest Don Mark should see it.

David's moodiness increased with the spring.

He did not take kindly to Don Mark, nor to Carver either, and burst out into frequent expressions of bitterness against Harvard, against the coast, against what he chose to call Peter's growing intellectual ossification. They had several rather acrid disputes, in which Peter, enthusiastic, but lacking in facts, did not come out the victor, but from which he emerged with a sense of David's emotional stupidity. Now and then David was drunk again; sometimes Peter found him in his room, apologetic after such a dispute, maudlin, hardly able to walk down the stairs. Once he vomited on Peter's rug and Peter's heart was bitter against David for a long while after that. But there was hardly any chance to come to the root of things; when Peter tried, he met a wall of reserve, and gave up trying, but he did find out that David had made no progress with his music whatsoever, and David admitted that he had torn up his sonata. That time David seemed eager to talk, almost pathetically eager, but Peter had a class to attend, and the bell rang. When Peter returned to his room, David was gone.

Peter wasted little time in missing David, finding Frank and Don Mark sufficient companionship. They stimulated in him a new sort of imagination, constructive toward life, and above all critical toward haphazard emotion. The life they offered him, the friendship and intimacy, was a cleaner thinking, harder hitting affair, a broader, sunnier point of view. Peter began to

feel as though his life were no longer lonely and unkempt, but travelling in a sort of sweep. His house on Holyoke Street became even more intimate to him, since he and Frank and Don were so often together in one room or the other. He began to take confidence in himself, since he was no longer Peter Kindred alone, but an integral part of a group of three, composed, besides himself, of two men in whom he felt reason to take pride. He began to reflect a bit of the pride himself, as though he were a deal wiser and gayer and better off after all than the chap Smith, who may have been doing well in business, but who was missing the splendid, careless friendliness of life, and the enthusiasm of fiery convictions, beliefs, and intolerances.

And so the spring blossomed into lilacs, transfigured with gay companionship and insistent argument, with light-hearted adventure and intense debates, for Peter with an elated, restless dreaming of the tawny woman, and a sly and stealthy consideration of tabooed romance. Even the tawny woman, upon the background of the house in Holyoke Street and the developing Peter, attained a new, if remote, but rather serene dignity.

With all this freshening, Peter grew dull to the worry of what might be ahead of him, and how well he might be preparing for it. With the lengthening days, the growing green, the smell of new grass and old, awakening trees, it was hard

to be much troubled with thoughts of his own dependence, hard to do more than accept each day blithely, and feel the muscles of his enthusiasm and his youth, swelling under the driving power of his friends. Light voices floated to him down the street through the soft spring evenings as he leaned out of his window, the faint, sensuous melancholy of the season lulled his body, leaving his mind content and fertile. A drowsy beauty took possession of Cambridge, and among voices and trees, among lilacs and the tinkle of half heard tunes, Peter moved through May.

Toward its end David came into Peter's room at last, and announced fairly calmly that he was through with college, and meant to leave for Europe within a week. The very shock of it left Peter without anything to say, and that gave David a chance to explain, which he did hurriedly at first, as though he had rehearsed it to himself beforehand.

"I'm wasting my time at Harvard," he said. He tried to carry it off contemplatively, but finally he could not any longer, and burst out,—*"It's useless, Peter. To tell you the truth, I'm through. I don't think you care a hang, but I have to say it anyhow. I'm through, that's all."*

"You're wrong, David," Peter said gently. "I do care. Why are you through?—what do you mean?"

"I mean this," David cried passionately, "that this place is too much for me. I'm kept down.

My race is thrown in my face. You yourself . . . Well, there is no encouragement."

"Encouragement? I thought . . ."

"Hang it, Peter, it's simply that I've come nowhere. There's nowhere to come to."

"Why, David?"

"Last year I was a child, and I knew it, but I said then that this year I'd be a man. I'm as full of childishness as ever. There's been nothing to grasp, nothing to lay hold of. I've not grown, not developed. Last year I should have been content, saying 'next year,' marking time, thinking of what I'd do. But this is next year, and I'm no different. All my ambitions have come to nothing. I have no friends, no place in college, no satisfaction with myself, no new life. But that isn't the important thing."

"Well?"

"It's this. I can't write music. I can't think music. I haven't the force to carry myself through anything. I've done nothing all this year, nothing, absolutely nothing. I can't write songs, Peter. The sonata was the most puerile thing you ever heard, all that I've done so far, and even at that I've run into a blank wall of sheer incapacity. Deep in me somewhere I feel something big that wants to be heard, and I sit at my desk, and I sit at my piano, and nothing comes, nothing but drivel. It's heartbreaking. And back of it all is weakness. I haven't the technique, the sureness in myself, confidence. I need a man to say

'Lookee here, young fellow, follow me and we'll do big things together.' There's no one here like that. No one at all."

There was a silence, and then Peter spoke.

"Aren't you, perhaps, too sensitive, David?"

"No, I'm not. You haven't been cut by the men in your own line of work because you're a Jew. You haven't been looking desperately for some big thing to grasp hold of, and then found only little dried-up facts. You haven't been up night after night until dawn racking your brains and your body and every last bit of you for a spark of something real. You haven't been alone as I have. And I wouldn't care, Peter, I wouldn't care for the loneliness, but God in heaven, if I were only getting ahead!"

"I know. For awhile I . . ."

"No, it's not the same thing. You're not trying to express yourself as I am. But I don't know what there is in me to express. With whom shall I grow here at Harvard? The big men won't have me. At what shall I work? Exercises? I'll never learn what music is and what life is and what the one has to do with the other by writing dum da de dum a dozen different ways on a scrap of paper.

"I have to get away, Peter. This place is purposeless. If I stay here, and have luck, some day I may be the music teacher of a boys' school in New England. That won't do. I must get where there is a purpose to things, and live with people

who believe, and who can strike fire in me. Then I can fill myself with it, and let it work out in me its own way. But here—why, man, they just doder along at exercises all their lives. They might as well be carpenters.”

“Somewhere in America there is fire, I think.”

“Flame, but no fire. Men are either hungry, or well fed. If they’re well fed, they are satisfied. If they’re hungry they howl and fight and rage around until they’re fed, and then they rest, and smile, and sleep after dinner, and grow fat.”

CHAPTER V

THE summer sun, heating the roof tops of the east, and staring out across the sea from its position directly above the uncomfortable towers of New York, saw David in mid-ocean, and Peter below itself, at home. Of the two I should deem Peter the more uncomfortable, and David the unhappier. It bade fair to be a hot summer; Peter was never content in New York, and the adventures of the summer before added definitely to his discontent. He caught himself listening to the fog horns of ships as the sounds drifted from the river and faintly from the bay below, and found himself dreaming idly of the sea, of ships and sails, of women, and of old cities. But his mind was tranced in a different manner than it had been in the spring, for it was an uneasy absent-mindedness, shot with small revolts and occasional futile beatings at the bare walls of the summer. The enforced intimacy with his family was not, perhaps, quite as unpleasant to Peter as it was a decided shock both to Peter and his family to dis-

cover each other. The two elder Kindreds had perforce stood still for many years, and, save for a certain stubborn settling process, were much the same as they had been ten years before. Edith, in an impressionable age, had grown with her generation, but gradually enough for her parents to accustom themselves to the change. Peter, however, shooting off in another direction entirely, presented a startling and sudden metamorphosis, for you must consider that he had not spent any considerable time in intimacy with his family since he had entered college.

Edith was anxious to make some sort of hero out of Peter at first, but he would fit into no possible heroic mould, as she understood heroes, and because of his very cutting scorn of all the heroes she knew and revered, she was forced at last to consider him an anarchist and no hero at all. In turn, Peter gave her no serious consideration, thinking that she lived in a fashion not only obviously thoughtless, but of no use to him whatsoever, either to study or to criticize more than in passing. So the two went their separate roads, with no remarkable good will toward each other, but with growing sarcasm making itself more and more evident toward the end of the summer, a sarcasm, however, without much rancor.

His father and mother, from his rôle of dependent, might not be so lightly regarded. They were prepared to find their son differing somewhat from themselves, in his treatment of certain phe-

nomena of his generation, just as Edith differed from them in her free and more inconsequential attitude toward sex, toward modesty and behavior and the like. But they were not prepared to have sex in general probed very deeply, or modesty, or any questions they considered to have answered themselves for their own generation; they were not prepared to have their own behavior questioned, or their morality, or any ancient and honorable institution they may have supported. Peter, coming from an atmosphere of nihilism, where nothing was sacred unless it was logical and vehement, was a disturbing element, and was in turn disturbed to find it necessary to defend his attitude at all, and baffled at the unreflective but stubborn opposition. It seemed to him almost impossible to discuss any matter clearly with his family, for they were none of them able to see anything impersonally, that is, separate and apart from its effect upon themselves, although in justice he was forced to confess that his father was not as bad in that respect as his mother and his sister. But what his father gained in logical powers, he lost in being both impatient and unimaginative and cursed with the anathema of the middle class, a hard-worked but full-bellied and unbitten spirit.

Mrs. Kindred took sides with Edith incontinently against Peter's outlandish ideas, but his father kept some slight semblance of a judicial spirit, enough, at least, to listen to Peter until his

patience gave out. Then he would bang his fist down on the table, frightening his wife and daughter into a temporary quiet, and order Peter to be still. Peter was unwilling to combat his father's authority, somewhat from a habit of obedience that could not be so lightly put aside, and somewhat, too, from a sense of dependence on him. The dependence irked him sorely, and it bothered him that he was forced to be both dependent and rebellious, but he was not brave enough by half to renounce that dependence and accept the consequences. He wanted to go back to college in the fall; he wanted time to think and time to grow, more than he cared for the satisfaction of asserting himself. To his mother and sister his attitude was unintelligible, but they thought it a passing phase in his growth, quite naturally coincident with what they took to be his wild college years. To his father, however, he was a source of deeper dissatisfaction and puzzlement and disappointment, for his father had sent him vaguely to college thinking to make him a gentleman, and so far he had come out as his mother said, an anarchist. Once or twice he thought of taking him out of college and putting him to work, but since Peter could graduate in another year by working a bit harder, he decided to go through with it. Once he nearly sent Peter from his table entirely. It was on the occasion of a visit to the Kindreds by a young married couple; the woman was big with child, and no mention was made of her condition,

and no mention of children, the Kindreds trying not to see anything unusual in the woman's appearance, and the visitors trying to display no self-consciousness. Peter, from diffidence, did as his family did, but the next day argued the matter at table.

"Why isn't she to be congratulated?" he asked. "She will be soon, at any rate."

"That is not table talk," his mother said sharply.

"Why not? There's nothing immoral about it. Why should a woman be ashamed to have a child? It's rather fine. Carver . . ."

"You're indelicate, to say the least," Edith said.

"Oh, why be so fussy about people's feelings?" Peter exclaimed. "They wouldn't have so many feelings if they thought more about them."

"That will do, Peter," his father said quietly. "You are not qualified to criticize our feelings about things. We understand them better than you do."

"Yes, sir. But certainly it's no secret that she's to have a child, and she must be pretty glad about it. So why be so secretive?"

"I think you're perfectly disgusting, Peter!" cried Edith. "You needn't try to be so smart about everything!"

"Really, dear," his mother added, "you are very silly. Things like that are holy; they simply are not talked about."

"It's just the holy things that ought to be talked about. If I had a child I'd give a party as soon as I knew I was going to have it."

"Peter!"

Mrs. Kindred turned to her husband. "No," she said, "I can't listen to much more of this. It isn't right. And Edith here . . . If you don't put your foot down pretty soon . . ."

"I pity your poor wife's feelings with you for a husband," said Edith.

"I'll never marry a woman with feelings!" Peter answered hotly.

"Be quiet, Peter!" cried his father. "I've heard enough. If you can't think of anything decent to talk about, keep still."

Peter's declaration of belief and faith in the form of his intention to marry no woman with feelings, was more of a surprise to himself than to Edith, who was not paying much attention to what he said, but to what effect her remarks made on him. He had never thought of marrying anyone, of any kind, and yet the announcement of the sort of woman he did not intend to marry popped into his mouth as naturally as though it were quite at home there. There were other announcements, too, that kept jumping to his tongue, surprising himself more than his family, thoughts that were only becoming articulate out of a brew of years.

His father did not ask him to work during the summer, so he did not, but spent the time in read-

ing, in writing letters, in wandering idly about, resting, arguing, and rebelling. It was a weary sort of life, with no point in it, and as hot days followed each other across the sky, and the asphalt grew soft and sticky under the sun, the breathless nights almost sleepless, Peter cursed his life and wished that he had done anything, anything other than what he had done, wished that he were in Paris with David, in the West with Don Mark, anywhere save beneath the intolerably close roof of his home. There were nothing but small things to do, and to wait as patiently as possible for the fall.

In August the Kindreds moved to a seaside resort for two weeks, and from there Peter wrote to Don Mark.

"In the surf," he wrote, "grown men and women are like children, making up the silliest games without either beginning or ending, jumping about with a fearful display of energy, and splashing and doing nothing. An hour afterward they are slick and dignified and full of little importances. There's a thought in there somewhere that I can't dig out, so I'll send it to you. I can't dig out very much, for the heat we've been having, and the general home atmosphere have wilted me considerably. One comes suddenly into a world of intensely personal reactions to everything; mother and Edith seem incapable of thinking of anything at all except as it may affect them, and then they have feelings. . . . I am tired to death

of feelings. Has everyone in the world feelings, but you and I and Frank?

"What do you hear from him since he graduated? He hasn't written me a word. David is happily settled in Paris, in an attic, I believe, in the Quarter, something he has furnished extravagantly, no doubt. . . . I am fairly eaten with longing to be in Cambridge again, to smell the autumn fires and the leaves on the ground. When will you be there? I'll probably go up a bit early. . . . Think of running up the creaky old stairs to find you sitting there!"

Later in the summer he read again Carver's *Religion Worth Having* and became definitely a Carverian. Unconsciously his family shaped his resolves, his family and its friends. He thought that they had nothing to bind them to life from one day to another excepting either curiosity or sexual excitement. They were individuals without a religion, easily thrown into small panics, always in a flutter of some emotion or other. Peter decided that his mother lived from one day to another from pure curiosity for gossip, and a horror of nothingness.

In this welter of helplessness Peter climbed the crag of the *Religion Worth Having* and perched there in the sun, watching the faithless moving below him, with pity and contempt so marked as to make himself quite intolerable to his family. Edith, in a letter to her very most intimate friend, described him.

"Peter gets sillier and sillier," she wrote, "and, my dear, he's quite impossible to live with. His latest is somebody by the name of Carver, who wrote a book called *The Religion Worth Having*. Did you ever read it? It's the driest thing. Peter gave it to me to read, and when I asked him what it meant he looked at me as though he wanted to bite me and began to talk like a regular old owl about how you're alive if you live, and dead if you don't live, and all you have is life anyhow, and so you have to live and that's why there's a state. Isn't it perfectly foolish? I laughed right in his face, and he was so angry!"

Peter wrote to Don in a different tone.

"Life, life . . ." he scribbled, "I think I see it. There is no greater good as far as we know, and what persists then in living must be right, and what dies, wrong. That which makes for life must be moral. I get more clearly your point now, that Carver means not the individual life of three score and ten, but generations upon generations of life. And still I do not quite understand the attitude he would have the individual life take toward the state. Suppose the state demands the individual life to be given up in order that the state may live? What then? It seems to me that he contradicts himself there."

To which Don wrote back a long letter.

"I have just come in from a solemn walk, in which I decided the fate of the trades unions, and

the state of my own soul. It was good to hear from you again; I am answering at once.

"Carver does mean the individual life, but to my mind, that life as expressed not only in its own self, but in the generations of its descendants, each one of whom expresses some bit of it, and as an expression itself of generations of ancestors. In other words, and you've heard this before, a man is longer lived, and thereby richer, whose personality will be carried on a long while after his body is dead, by his children, and their children. After all, we are most intent upon immortality. Even more than we are on life. If I could send a great name into history for thousands of years by dying to-day, do you think I'd hesitate? And yet, if my state fell apart, where would be my immortality? Where are the heroes of Ethiopia? Don't laugh, I'm serious. Besides, alive, I can't compete alone with other groups, but as the member of a strong group I can, and successfully.

"There are only a handful of us whose names will go down. For the million others, there is still the sure immortality we know of, sons and daughters. But for them to live, just as for us to live, there is need of a strong state, first and foremost, and they must be given a strong position in that state if we can give it them, or at any rate, no handicap. The children of some of us will be great, even if we are not.

"That, I think, is what Carver means. We must be willing to give our lives to the state, if

our lives will enable the state and our children and their children to live and remember us."

Peter jealously guarded his thoughts from his parents; he knew they would consider them ridiculous, and despaired of being able to prove anything to them other than what they were able to feel. Yet when he came to analyze the lives of his mother and father, he could put his hand on nothing definitely wrong. His father worked, as any man should work, and cared for his family as any man should. His mother attended to the home economics. What else was there for them to do, even under a stern Carverian system of production?

"What should I do, Mister Smarty?" asked Edith. "Stay home from dances and parties to read about labor unions and things?"

"Yes," said Peter.

"That would be pleasant, wouldn't it!" Edith exclaimed. "I suppose you think that woman you went with on the ship last summer sat in her cabin and read philosophy all day!"

"It would be a holy sight better for your children if you did, and you might know something more than love stories then, and dance steps."

"I'd never have any children at that rate," Edith said brazenly, and then blushed fiery red and blamed it at once on Peter. "I think you're perfectly horrid!" she cried.

Here then, was an answer strangely in his own coin, and it silenced him. And yet he knew well enough that Edith had no passion for children, and that it was not for a large family of her own that she danced and gallivanted. Yet Carver himself would admit the primary importance of being married.

And here then, again, Peter failed to see through the fog of aimlessness, the slow drifting movement of the people about him, to the little understood desires which actuated that movement, the dim faith, the jumbled belief. And again Peter would admit of no compromise, but saw only a stark right or a dismal wrong. It was not enough that men should work out their lives to produce for their families as best they could, and that women should marry and breed. Folk were either earnest Carverians, or they had feelings, and were nothing.

"Well," he said to Edith scornfully, "perhaps it would be better if you didn't have any, then."

But that was wrong, too, of course, and he knew it was.

It was a resolved Peter who opened wide his arms to his old room in Cambridge again, as firmly resolved as Don Mark, a Peter who was a man, or very nearly one, with true dislikes and the beginning of a morality. The summer had crowded him, and that had hurried his digestion;

with the taste of thoughtlessness, of drifting, of undetermined living in his memory, he cleaned and swept his mind of all of it, and then opened it eagerly to violent belief again, but with something more definite to criticize than he had ever had before. And yet, in the wind of Cambridge, in the familiar mustiness of the house on Holyoke, the gray, level streets, the low frame dwellings, the bars of yellow sunlight on Mount Auburn Street, and in his friend's boisterous welcome and his crushing handshake Peter found that the summer had fled him almost before he looked to see it go.

But Frank, a graduate, was in the north, and David was in Paris, Don Mark had moved to Frank's old room across the hall from Peter; they missed Frank's noisy blasphemy more than they would have thought possible. All Cambridge seemed quieter for lack of it, and the house on Holyoke was unusually still, as though it were listening for an echo of his feet thundering up the stair. Peter missed David, but secretly and occasionally, at times when he felt tired and content and would have liked to smoke while David played.

He enrolled at once with Carver, but in order to effect the proper distribution of his courses, so that he might graduate at the end of the year, he was forced to fill his schedule as full as it would hold with other courses in other departments. It was with a faint chill of apprehension that he set

his alarm for half past six, and made an oath that he would really make that hour his rising time. But Don was up at six, and there was small chance of Peter lying abed much later, for if he tried to, Don came in and dumped him unceremoniously onto the floor, or stole his covers and left him gradually to freeze, which was worse.

Acting upon a decision they had made in the spring of the year before, the two bought season tickets to the Symphony, Peter surrendering his savings of the summer and mortgaging his future. Before the concerts started the ticket gave Peter a solemn feeling of aristocratic culture, and the shadow of excitement at the thought of the various pleasant things there were for him to taste of, if he wanted to.

The autumn was given up to a consideration of all that the summer had brought forward, all the ideas, the questions and the decisions, to hard work, and to enthusiasm for Carver. But since Peter had come to the gist of his remarks long before he heard them, the lectures as a whole were a disappointment. He did not have the keen interest in technical and theoretical economics that Don had; he cared for the subject only in a general way, and as it affected himself, but the spirit that actuated the lecturer grew big in Peter, until he even went so far once or twice as to contradict Don Mark, and at those times he very craftily quoted from his lectures.

Peter was more curious about women than he

was about trades unions or tariff issues; there was a large part of him that sought earnestly after womankind, and yet was puzzled by them and suspicious of them. The heroine of his imagining was giving place to another type, that was, however, essentially vague in his mind, a woman embodying beauty, a vacuum where her feelings should have been, possessed of logic, and chosen with an eye to her offspring. He had never encountered any such woman, and his conception of her was purely verbal. His attitude had changed toward the pretty faces that passed him on the street, almost without his realizing it, and he wondered if they were capable of thinking and if they did think, instead of wondering if they were capable of loving and if they did love. The romances that occasionally danced attendance through his mind on some particularly pleasant-looking woman, no longer ended at courtship, but began after marriage, and ended at the ripe old age of ninety or thereabouts, with a golden wedding.

"I wouldn't much care," Peter said seriously. "After all, it's not so fearfully important if a woman is pretty. It's just a sort of selfishness that makes a man want to own a pretty woman . . . don't you think? I'd want one busy with some real work, that would fit in with mine. . . . I wouldn't want to have to be thinking about her face all the time. I'd want to be able to discuss things with her, and not have her go off into a fit

right away. Anyhow, she'd have to be intelligent enough to bring up her own children."

"How many children?" asked Don solemnly, blowing a ring of smoke toward the ceiling.

"Jinks, I don't know," Peter answered earnestly, and then, catching sight of Don's expression, grinned sheepishly.

"Well, Peter, old philosopher, we'll have to see what we can do for you." Don sighed, and stretched himself.

"Come to the Waldorf and I'll feed you an egg sandwich, while we think it over a bit."

They walked up the dark, windy street together toward the lamp light of Massachusetts, their footsteps sounding thin and clear in the frosty night air.

"No, but seriously, Don," Peter was saying, "I think this business of love is awfully overdone. I mean, it's all very well for a time, but marriage is a different thing; of course I'd have to care a good deal about a woman . . ."

"Naturally," Don said. "One wouldn't want to marry a slut, you know . . . a marriage should be a contract between two sensible people and the state in which the two people agree to support their children."

"Of course," Peter said. "The children are everything. I think that women without children are pretty bad . . . that is, if they're married."

"Well," Don said, "you can't always have children."

"Bother," said Peter, "I wouldn't live with a woman if I couldn't."

"Still," Don argued, "you might be married and poor and want to wait."

"Then," Peter answered, "I'd sleep in another room."

"You might find it a bit heroic," Don said mildly.

"Don't be absurd," said Peter.

They went to their first Symphony concert together. At the last moment Peter could not decide how to dress, and was torn between the desire to make a great deal of the evening by wearing a dinner coat, and the feeling that he ought not be so impressed, and should wear whatever he had on. Don, however, taking it as a matter of course, was wearing a soft shirt, and so Peter decided that he was amply dressed, and outshone Don by the shiny margin of a stiff collar.

At the Square, they climbed into a well-worn trolley that presently set out down Massachusetts for Boston. Don had an air of starting on a lark; Peter felt more like an adventure, his state of mind a mingle of excitement and cultured solemnity as befitted the occasion. He felt that he was taking a definite step toward a liberal appreciation of things, and stepping well out of his family to do it. He was opening closed chambers in himself, and would presently fill them with a treasure reserved for a few. He started

to think "If the folks were to see me now" with a thrill of satisfaction, but grew immediately subdued and faintly depressed at the realization that if his folks were to see him on his way to the Symphony, his father would be furious at his extravagance.

The trolley sped past the lighted windows of the shops facing the Yard, ricocheted around a curve, and shrilled into darkness, swaying, its glass windows rattling. Finally it came smoothly into the light of Central Square again, and became filled to the brim with people. Peter tried to pick out men and women whom he thought might be going to the Symphony; there were two Harvard men, and several elderly, austere couples. They went on into darkness again, and bumped over cobblestones with a great crashing and rattling of windows, past the looming hulks of quiet freight cars, marked by far-off red and green lights, and so on over the deep blackness of the river, a wide sweep of utter dark below them, caught here and there in the glimmer of starlight, and in the shivering pools of drowned copper which were the reflections of the long and regular arcs of lamps that dwindled along the opposite river banks and spun across Kendal Bridge.

Peter was struck by the lofty severity of the great hall, and then by the type of people about him, in fairly plain dress, old and contented people with sharp New England features, younger men and women preparing to listen intelligently.

Young and old, many seemed to know each other and bowed and smiled and whispered, but evidently they came to hear the orchestra and their acquaintances were incidental. There was nothing gorgeous or astounding, save only perhaps the multitude of black-coated musicians in ascending rows upon the stage; there was no flourish of jewelry and bosoms, no fanfare of society, but a fairly quiet gathering of people from their homes and their dinner tables where they had eaten in peace with their families about them, with no worry at all about their appearance, or their friends' appearance, or their daughters' either.

The multitude of musicians, after preliminary discordant tuning, fell silent; a bell tinkled, and Dr. Muck sidled out of a door and crossed to the front of the stage; the audience broke into polite applause; the musician, after bowing gravely a moment or so, stepped up on his box and faced the orchestra, tapped his baton on the music stand before him, raised it quietly, and brought it down again. An oboe wailed, and Peter heard his first symphonic music. With the initial crashing ensemble his heart leaped out after the music, and was presently distanced and left to run idly after, washed and whelmed in rhythms and harmonies until it grew tired. Then Peter stared about him at the intent faces of the audience, at the graceless Greek statues in their niches above his head, and let his

thoughts run after his heart to bring it back again, which is a fairly unintelligible way of saying that he thought of no more than little personal things about his work, his family, his room, his finances, a collar button he had lost. When he had got his heart back to him again and was growing restless, the first movement came to an end, and he breathed deeply and changed the position of his knees. Don, beside him, did likewise.

After the Symphony they walked together along the marble corridor at the side of the hall, to the wider entrance at the front. There they found a group of Harvard men, some of whom they knew, dressed variously in dinner coats and soft shirts. The front hall was filled with men smoking; the elderly men discussed the symphony, and in different groups the Harvard men did likewise; the middle-aged Boston men walked up and down and talked of all manner of things. Peter and Don went back to the side corridor and walked up and down.

"Well, well," said Don suddenly, "look there!"

Peter looked up, startled, and saw coming toward them the slim young woman Don had pointed out to him enviously at the tea party of the year before. It was with a shock of recognition that he saw her, much the same as he had seen her then, pink-cheeked and formless, her reddish-brown hair drawn tightly up on her head, her eyes encircled by tortoise-shell glasses, and low-heeled ground-gripping shoes on her feet. He

drew an involuntary breath of surprise; as she passed he caught a glimpse of gray eyes behind the glasses, of a saucy nose, and a firm mouth. With her were two other women, an elderly one who might have been a teacher, and was probably a chaperon, and a younger one of her own age, or thereabouts, with dark hair and eyes, and a plump figure. This friend did not wear low-heeled shoes; Peter looked carefully to see.

The two groups passed each other again, and Don received a demure glance from the dark-haired woman. The other one looked quite innocently directly through Peter and out beyond his back, so that he was made to believe that she had not noticed him at all, and indeed, he had not expected her to notice him, but the fact that she did not, mortified him. A bell rang, and they hurried to their seats.

They did not see the two women and their chaperon after the concert, although they looked for them. They walked slowly toward the bridge, against the wind, burrowing into their coats. Peter spoke first.

"She is sort of interesting, Don," he said.

"Very likely," Don answered. "I imagine she's Radcliffe, or some finishing school. I hope not a finishing school."

"Yes, that would be too bad. But she doesn't look very finished. . . . Would you call her pretty?"

Don stared at him in amazement. "Lord," he said, "I'm sure I don't know."

"I thought she wasn't bad looking," said Peter defiantly. "She has rather lovely eyes. . . ."

"Peter, Peter," cried Don, "you come home! Did you hear the man! Come home, and I'll make you a lovely cup of coffee, and you can make eyes into it. For the love of heaven, lad."

They climbed the stairs together to Don's room where, presently, a little coffee percolator bubbled and hummed and sputtered, while a blue flame fluttered beneath it. The room was in shadow save for two candles, and the wavering flame of the percolator. Peter lay sprawled on the couch and watched it, still hearing faintly and far away the sweeping sound of violins, the blare of horns and drums and basses.

"I think I'm going to try to meet her," he said at last, drowsily.

Don lit his pipe and waved the burnt match at Peter. "Go to it," he said, and chuckled.

Peter spent a week wondering if a woman with low heels, small ankles, fairly obtrusive feet, and not overmuch hair were a natural or an unnatural animal, if she appeared as she did for comfort and good reasons, or if it betokened a sarcastic attitude toward men. He hardly bothered with the question of who she might be, for he had no means of answering it until he had solved the riddle of meeting her, and that was so unsolvable

that he spent no time wondering about it at all. He could not help imbuing her with attributes both pleasant and unpleasant, and wondering if they were true of her. From his two glimpses of her he tried to build some estimate of the woman herself, and yet he did not willingly concede her pleasant attributes, but tried to make the least of her in his mind. The result was that at the end of a week she was a fairly unpleasant character to him, cold-blooded, capricious, and headstrong, inhuman to children, and difficult to talk to. This he fashioned out of her gray eyes, her mouth perhaps a trifle too firm, and her seemingly careless array. He was stubbornly unwilling that she should be splendid, and the fact that her nose and eyes were good gave him little stabs of jealousy and half of admiration. He did not know his reluctance to think well of her for antagonism, but took it to be both skepticism and experience. Yet how little he knew of either. He was, indeed, antagonistic to her, to her proud bearing, and disputed instinctively her right to own a mind and a will and a personality of her own that would be unwilling to cede ground to him. And yet, he could not help envying her acquaintance.

The background of his family handicapped him; it took his pride away from under him, and gave him what Don called an inferiority complex, a feeling that his core was not quite as sound as hers was, that her fundamental culture and training were better perhaps; that if he were

gone into deeply enough, something would be found savoring of the uncouth. He thought that Don had no such trouble as that, and compared himself to Harvard and to Harvard men with a touch of resignation for his lack of quiet confidence and such rightness and natural dignity as they had, and their fathers had had. His father lacked dignity, it was not born into him, but had been acquired, and he was never quite sure if it were correct.

He did not see her the next Saturday, at the second symphony. During the week following, he was pressed with work, and spent his time either in the library or at his desk. Don, busy as well, did not disturb him. With his thoughts taken away from him for a time and bent upon an impersonal problem, the matters of women and sex were forgotten. He began to think of smiling at the whole matter, and prepared to put it out of his mind with its attendant uneasiness. When he saw her again at the third symphony he watched her impersonally; during the intermission he discussed the music with Don, as far as he was able, interested to find that he had not been entirely lost in the music, which was Beethoven, and feeling pleased at that, and musical. Still, coming home he was silent, and did not answer Don when he hummed a theme from the symphony, but stared gloomily ahead.

That night he sat a long while in Don's room saying nothing, and went finally into his own room

where he undressed slowly and went resolutely to bed.

Before he fell asleep he sighed, and smiled, as he dozed, at a picture of himself faultlessly arrayed promenading up and down the marble foyers of the Symphony in grave discussion with the gray-eyed woman. After the discussion was over, he helped her gallantly into his impressive motor, and they started out together, whereat her formless body became monstrously formless and she became all feet. With that he fell asleep.

He awoke with the rather ecstatic decision to bother no more about her, but to give her free access to his thoughts if she wanted it, and as for meeting her, to trust to the Lord, who had handled his affair with the bursar so carefully. Having decided that irrevocably, he went blithely to his breakfast, and had no thought of her again until shortly before the Christmas holidays.

He was invited in a roundabout way to be a part of an audience at a performance of the Workshop, which is the testing room of a famous or infamous course in dramatic literature at Harvard, according to your lights and your opinions. He went without much interest, and mostly from a willingness to be sociable. When the curtain went up on the second short play, the gray-eyed, russet-haired woman was sitting in a rocking chair on the stage, knitting, and his heart commenced to beat in loud, powerful thumps.

During the short play this woman held her audience intent upon her, filling the whole stage with her slight presence, and although she was neither beautiful nor eminently artistic, there was a force and a simplicity about her that sounded in her precise voice, and made the audience thoughtful of her whether it would or no. Peter, sitting in his seat with his knees drawn up under his chin and his arms wrapped about them, stared at her with the intentness of his entire body, watching every slightest motion she made, as though from the sight of her on the stage and the sound of her voice he was to gather and understand the whole of her. The curtain went down to a hearty applause, and Peter gazed blankly around him at people's faces.

From the talk of neighbors he gathered that she was a Miss Joan Somebody-or-other, of Boston, Radcliffe, a famous name in her college, a member of the Idler, possessed of an intolerant mind but an indubitable dramatic talent. Peter was shaken by both delight and dismay, and had small stomach for the remainder of the plays, but sat with his chin in his hand, and a dour look on his face, thinking how little he would have to say to her, and how embarrassed he would be saying it to her, yet how essential that he meet her, nevertheless, and say something. To meet her would not be difficult; he had an acquaintance among the players. Yet when this fellow greeted him at the end of the performance, Peter did not ask to meet

Miss Joan Somebody-or-other, but said nothing at all about her, and went home finally in a towering rage at himself.

The next day, determined, but bitterly self-conscious, he asked his acquaintance of the Workshop to introduce him to her.

Joan was inclined to be friendly and interested, but in quite a decent sort of way, rather as though she were not anyone in particular, and as though, for all she knew, Peter might be. Such an attitude disarmed Peter, and he was, besides, overawed at talking to her finally, and listening to her talking to him; at being, all of a sudden, acquainted. He found something to say, and said it even more awkwardly than he had feared he would. Joan, however, overlooked his awkwardness, and yet he felt that for all her simplicity and affability she would criticize him unsparingly once she decided that it was time for him to have settled this initial embarrassment, and would demand from him a close accounting of his intelligence. He liked that, although he champ'd a little to himself, and felt like crying out for her to bring on her old intelligence and he'd show it.

He was impressed with her direct way of talking, her chin a bit in the air, and from the quiet way she said things he fancied that she was not in the habit of being disagreed with. Yet it did not give him the wish to disagree with her, or to oppose her, but he did feel an uncommon longing to say something well, and to interest her eyes,

which were not interested in him, but looked beyond him at some far-away figure, herself, perhaps, whom he did not know, or some friend, utterly remote to him. He wanted to know her all at once, and to know her thoughts and the significance of her motions and her expressions. He wanted very much to dare the entire battery of her criticism immediately, and be passed intimately into her life and her thoughts, or be routed, massacred without further delay. He felt impatient at her strangeness and unfamiliarness.

The account Don got of her was confused. Peter, himself dazed at the remarkable fact of really having met her, could give him no description of her that did not involve a scrambling of her appearance and his impressions. The resulting omelette was Joan, not quite as pretty as she really was, but rather more intelligent.

"I haven't the faintest idea what I said to her," he told Don, "but I have a feeling that it was something I shouldn't. She has a way of talking, and looking at you with her chin that makes you feel small and criticized, and makes you want to say something quickly and as pompously as you can. She does really look at you with her chin, as though it were all ready to sniff . . ."

"Were her feet very noticeable?" Don asked.

Peter maintained a dignified silence until Don broke out laughing at him, and then he grew red and finally laughed back.

"Do you know," he said, "I never thought of them. They're so natural."

Peter went moodily into his own room. He was angry that he should be so tormented, and a bit out of sorts with himself for caring about it. The thought of Joan was too busy in his mind, he could not rid himself of it. He did not wish to see her, and yet he did; he had nothing he wished to say to her, and knew that she had nothing to say to him, but felt, nevertheless, as a man feels who considers that he has come badly out of an encounter where he should have done well, and hesitates to leave his adversary, but dawdles nearby, uneasy, important, always upon the brink of words, but silent. It is probable that if he had done well at his first meeting with Joan, he would have forgotten her more easily, or rather put her further out on the fringe of his mind, but as it was, he expected something of himself and was impatient because he did nothing and because there was nothing to do.

Two days before the Christmas holidays he met Joan coming out of the Coop. With her was the same dark-haired girl he had seen at the Symphony. His heart gave a thump, and then he felt cold. He was furious at himself for that, and between the thump and his anger, he was confused. For an instant Joan looked troubled and hesitated, then nodded her head to him briefly. He bowed, and went toward her rather stupidly,

wishing with all his might, while his feet led him along, that he had gone quietly by. Joan seemed to be a bit dismayed at him. They shook hands in mutual embarrassment, and after they had both said how do you do, there was a moment of silence. Peter, with a flaming face, finally exclaimed in a dry, unnatural voice, "I . . . I was wondering . . . if you remembered me."

At Peter's intense embarrassment Joan smiled, and looked at him calmly. "Oh, yes," she said, "I met you at the Workshop." She turned to her friend. "Helen, I'd like to introduce Mr. . . ." she became slightly confused again but shook her head impatiently. "Mr. —?" she asked, looking at Peter.

"Kindred," Peter said, mortified and self-conscious.

"Of course, Mr. Kindred. This is Miss Helen Graff."

The black-haired girl smiled pleasantly and shook hands cordially with Peter.

"Didn't I see you at the Symphony?" she asked, "with a tall, yellow-haired man?"

"Yes, indeed." Peter felt his blood flow evenly along his veins again with a deal of satisfaction. His heart rode high, like an unburdened ship. The two women started to walk across the Square toward Massachusetts and Peter went with them. Joan looked whimsically at Helen, but luckily for Peter he did not see it, or he would have found some excuse for leaving them at once.

Helen smiled back at Joan, and talked to Peter about the Symphony. He answered her as thoughtfully as he could, and felt that he was not doing badly, at any rate.

The two women went into one of the shops, and Peter went fairly helplessly along, to their hidden amusement. Then the three walked up Massachusetts until they came upon the Merle, and Peter boyishly and clumsily asked them to take chocolate with him. The very awkwardness of his request made it impossible for them to refuse, although they were taken aback. If he had had more confidence and had asked them more politely, they wouldn't have gone, but his disingenuous invitation was appealing, and they accepted. They sat together at a small, warm table, while the world went by outside.

"Do you like the French music very much?" asked Joan. "I don't. . . . As one man would say, it makes you feel rather lazy . . . as though you never wanted to work any more . . . don't you think?"

"Carver, by the Lord!" popped out of Peter's mouth, and he looked in sheer amazement at Joan.

"Do you know him?" she asked.

"No—that is, I don't know him—but I know of him—and his ideas."

Joan smiled at him agreeably.

"What do you say to him?"

"Yes, yes. By all means. Do you?"

"Yes, indeed. I don't know that I quite agree with him about everything, though. Do you?"

"Hmm . . . well . . . Oh, I don't know . . . I don't believe I've read enough about it."

Peter noticed that Helen Graff gave her hot chocolate two quick chews before she swallowed it, but that Joan did not. It pleased him that she did not, although the chocolate at the Merle is so thick it might well be chewed. Joan ate rather daintily, he thought, and then he spilled a drop of chocolate on himself and was ashamed.

"Do you know," Joan said, and laughed, "when I met you I thought that you were an aesthete. Isn't it odd? You might be, you know. I'm glad you're an economist, it's rather jolly."

She had warmed toward him, and felt at her ease with him. When he was not embarrassed, as he had been at their meeting, there was a frank, impetuous air about him that one either liked at once or found intolerable.

"I'm awfully glad you think so," he said. "I've never known anyone from Radcliffe. So you are sort of mysterious. To tell the truth, I was fearfully scared at meeting you, and I almost didn't."

"Why?" Helen asked.

Peter blushed. "I don't know," he said. But he did know, somewhat. So he fibbed a little. "I was rather afraid that you'd be awfully intelligent," he said.

"Aren't we?" Joan asked him saucily.

"Yes, of course . . . but I meant forbidding and very wise . . . just Radcliffe."

"Goodness!" cried Helen, "what has the man against Radcliffe?"

"Oh, nothing," Peter said hastily. "But there's a sort of tradition, you know." The phrase low heels nearly popped out, but he shut his mouth on it. "At least, here at Harvard Radcliffe women are supposed to be . . . a bit haughty, perhaps."

"Do hear the man!" Helen cried.

"Why is that?" Joan asked.

Peter felt uncomfortable, and wished that he had never started talking of Radcliffe. However, he took a breath and looked at Joan defiantly.

"I suppose it's because most Radcliffe women we see on the streets look that way. And then, you never do anything but serious things, and you have no college life, and no real college and no Yard."

"We have a very real college life, Mr. Kindred," Joan said kindly, "and we are very busy in it. We have also a college, and quite a pleasant little Yard. After vacation you must come up to see me, and I'll show it to you."

"May I?" said Peter, who had been very much humbled by her tone. They rose to go; on the street outside the Merle, Joan held out her hand. Peter took it, and so said good-bye, although he had not expected to, and after shaking hands with Helen, and promising to call on them both after

Christmas, he watched them pass along the avenue, and turned soberly toward his room.

Don was packing and the sight depressed Peter. There was a cheerless, half-filled trunk in the center of his room, his closets were bare of clothes, books were scattered on the floor. Peter looked through the door and scowled; he swung on his heel and went gloomily into his own room. He felt no elation at going home; he wanted to stay in Cambridge, but he did not want Cambridge to be deserted. He missed the notes in his spirit which usually responded to the cold, piney stir of Christmas, and he felt as though a festival were passing by him, and he were not interested in it at all, as though he were an abstracted foreigner in Seville during a procession. It was with regret that he thought of meeting his family again and having forced upon him a realization of dependence, the narrow outlines of his group, submissiveness. He could not bring the thought of Joan home with him, to that environment, unless he went home frankly contemptuous and openly classing himself with Joan's group, fundamentally opposed to the group his family represented. He was not sure enough of himself for that; he was not sure at all that Joan accepted him, or that he had any real right to consider himself a unit in any group but the one in which he had been born.

"It makes me feel underhanded about living," he said to Don. "I'm entirely dependent, or practically so, because my scholarship amounts to very

little, on a man who can't afford it without a good deal of sacrifice. Yet I haven't any respect for him. He expects me to come out of college and be a pride to him in his own group, but I sha'n't."

"Still, Peter, your dependence on your father is just along with your own philosophy, you know," Don said gently.

"Yes, I suppose it is. But it makes me feel uncomfortable. I might be rather fond of father if I weren't dependent on him. It pulls me down toward him, and I want to climb away. It seems sort of dastardly to kick back at him, when after all, it's his own self I'm climbing on. But what is there to do?"

"Well," Don said judiciously, "there's really nothing to do but grow up, and see what happens. Meanwhile, let him have his way; he likes that, and it doesn't hurt."

"Hmm," Peter muttered, "I suppose so. But it's fairly cowardly."

"Then leave college, and go out and work."

"Frankly—it's the last thing I want to do."

"Well, then?"

"I know it. It's silly to bother."

Peter went home with the decision not to bother, but to be as gentle-spirited as it was possible to be, and to keep his own thoughts strictly to himself. However, he found it impossible; he was too young, and too intent upon being right. He made a gallant attempt of two days; his mother was satisfied, his father content, and then he grew

gloomy and curt and finally gave vent to an accumulated and bitter jeer that froze his family into a moment of astounded horror. He was sorry then, but the thing was done; his mother wept a little by herself, and her husband, noticing it, became heavy-hearted and almost pathetically silent. Only Edith gave battle to Peter, passionately, and very nearly drowned him with wave after wave of feelings, hers, her parents', her friends', her acquaintances', and finally people's in general. To Edith, Peter turned a cold, sarcastic eye, but underneath it, carefully hidden, was an unhappy sense of shame, as though he had been caught in an hysterical outburst at an indiscreet child. It caused him to feel neither wise nor good, but young and uncontrolled.

He left his family with a mixture of relief and reproach for himself, as a man leaves an unfortunate wretch to whom he has just been rightly but uncommonly nasty. His parents were not glad that he went, although they would not have wanted him to stay. They were unhappy at his presence, but more unhappy that he left them for an environment that was drawing him more and more away from them. His mother was reluctant to bid him good-bye, and held him close to her for a moment. It touched Peter and caused him to feel guilty toward her; it embarrassed him, and he left a bit rudely; she watched him pass below the street lamp, from her window, and she wanted to cry. Peter, on the street, condemned himself fu-

riously for that rudeness, and was half minded to go back again, but there was no time for it. For a while Peter's father grew bitter toward his work, and morose at home, but that wore off again, and life for the Kindreds flowed on placidly as before, the tide, perhaps, deepened and en-salted with a current of gathering old age, a hint of loneliness and helplessness. Peter wrote his parents long and affectionate letters, and these strained out the tide a little. Edith, finding that her parents did not wish a champion against Peter, was moved to blow out the flame under the kettle of her feelings, and as her indignation simmered down, so did her memory of the affair, and after she had expressed herself to her friends and cronies on the subject of selfish, smart-Aleck brothers, she forgot all about it, and almost forgot that she had any brother at all.

CHAPTER VI

PETER lay awake in his berth a long while, lulled by the swift motion of the train, staring through the black oblong of the window, now at darkness, without motion, now at stars that rose and fell across the windowpane as the car rocked from side to side. He was deeply content at returning to Boston again, at the thought of Cambridge before him. He was eager to forget his troubledness with himself, and to come clear of his family into the serene house on Holyoke Street, to leave the tall, gray walls and the sunless streets of New York behind him. He blamed himself for the miserable week he had spent, but he tried not to think of his family; it was a vastly unpleasant business, all of it, and he wanted to get back to his own room again and to forget it, to straighten out his thoughts again, to untangle his spirit and put it out to air. It needed airing, he thought, it was soiled. He fell asleep watching the stars swinging up and down, his head deep among the soft pillows of the berth.

When he awoke the train was rushing on through grayness. He looked out the window; dawn was breaking in the east, his window faced the west. The countryside was heavily covered with snow, fallen lately; it looked very cold and blue and still. The sky was gray, faintly lighted by the first flush of the sunrise he could not see. Shadows were deep, in quiet blue and umber, like pools. The train swept past a group of still, brown houses, their roofs heavy with snow, their shingled sides dim and misted with frosty blue, a lonely village in the country, hushed with the snow. A gold light burned in the window of a cottage; the train clicked over a crossroads, the bars down, a yellow lantern swinging, a bell tinkling; the empty white road wound lonesomely over a hill and was lost. Past gaunt maples and sombre pines and birches into low, level fields, rocks, a glimpse of brown earth, the impassive countryside, still, snowy, shadowed and mysterious.

No people live here, thought Peter; this is the land, as mighty and as immortal as the sea. He was oppressed with a sense of the desolation of that country, the isolation, the loneliness of life there, the need, in such a country, to huddle about a fire. And yet, he thought, it is not terrible, save as the sea is, in its tremendous quietness and carelessness of us. Man is the wisest of all animals, and the loneliest, the most fearful of silence. He thought of New York; he said to him-

self that people prefer discomfort to solitude, and he wondered what it was in solitude they feared and hated so. He could not answer it, and thought of the many, many little villages scattered about the country, huddled together from the snow, of the lonely and limited lives implicit in them, the dwarfed desires of men and women, the bound and narrowed horizons. It was a vision of small things, of futile things, a vision of men's hands blocked and defeated by the still land, of desires groping for expression, doomed to failure, passion forced to the rut of living, inarticulate life, gaunt and joyless. It was a vision of men and maids, of crude loves growing old, of dreams coming to nothing. Is that why we fear the land, he asked himself, our dreams coming to nothing? In the quiet of the land we can hear them die away. . . . He stared out at the snow. The train swept on toward Boston.

But Boston was subtly changed. It had been a city of various people, of faces and manners, a city of pleasant tendencies that were manifest in its folk. Now it was inescapably to Peter the city of a person. Joan lived there, and Boston was her setting. He felt as a man feels in a particular woman's house, curious of the rooms in which she moved and talked, the hangings she stirred as she passed through, the shadows she walked among. He could not watch the streets as he had before when he thought that they belonged to Boston, to the shopkeepers, to folk he did not know. They

belonged to Joan now, they were a part of her country. Everything there was an expression of her, of her life and her community. It was a strange sensation to Peter, half friendly because Joan was friendly, and half unfriendly because it took Boston away from him and gave it over to Joan. The very cold of the early morning that bit at his hands as he struggled with his valise from the train to the trolley was her cold; it belonged to her city, in which, somewhere, she was probably asleep in her own maidenly room. He did not feel the same toward Cambridge, however, I think because Harvard was a more lordly affair than Radcliffe and so, of course, a Harvard man would be more important there and more at home than a Radcliffe woman.

For a day his room, warm, sunny, faintly fragrant with tobacco, spiritually spacious, contented him. Don, from the west, was late, with a special addition of two days to his vacation. Then evening drew down on Cambridge, blowing the snow to a chillier crunch underfoot, blowing the air to crisper, frostier cold, drifting over the roofs of Cambridge, about the windows, and up and down the streets in palest emerald, adding distance and uncertainty to voices, kindling lamps. The house on Holyoke became very, very still; steps went by down Holyoke Street, and the muffled sound of cars moving over snow came faintly from Massachusetts. In his room Peter sat alone, more homesick than he had been since his first

year at Exeter, with nothing before him but supper.

All the next day Cambridge was gaunt and like a skeleton to him. He thought it was because Don was not there. He seemed to be living in an accustomed but unfamiliarly empty house, and he waited impatiently for Don's arrival. Don did not come until near noon of the third day; his train had been delayed by snow; he was sitting happily in his room when Peter trudged back from a lecture. Peter was jubilant at seeing him again, and threw his loneliness out from him. They spent the whole afternoon and evening together, unpacking, talking, smoking and gossiping, in Cambridge and in Boston, where they wound up appropriately in honor of the occasion.

It was strange how Peter's room mellowed with Don across the hall, and with what a rush life became friendly and comfortable again.

"We are a lonely sort of animal," he said to Don reflectively, "and quite at odds with quiet. I thought about it on the way up from New York. I was fearfully lonely here, and hated the stillness. But now that you're back, I like the stillness. We always seem to need one thing, a thought or a person, to put us right with everything. Just thoughts, or people, won't do. The more thoughts, and the more people—if that one isn't there—the lonelier we get. It's odd, isn't it?

Yet the day after Don had come there was still something bare and unfilled in his content, and he

came to the conclusion that it had to do with Joan.

He was restless with the desire to see her again, and kept watching for her on the street. His desire to see her was mixed somewhat with the thought that he ought to see her, and the thought that if he put it off too long she would probably forget who he was again. He did not want to be forgotten. And yet, he was half afraid of meeting her, and it would have taken a great deal of urging to have gotten him to go boldly up to her Hall and to ask for her. He kept thinking that he had a long time before him, and that he would doubtless come across her; yet at times he became impatient with himself, and restless, and felt that priceless days were slipping from him, and he was doing nothing.

He went carelessly to the first Symphony after the holidays, and realized with a start of dismay as he was entering the hall that he was slovenly, in an old suit and a soft shirt, and that Joan might be there. During the music he lost himself in reverie, his body contentedly answering the rhythms and harmonies as far as it was able, so that during the intermission he got up from his seat and started for the foyer with Don, quite thoughtless of himself. At the door he remembered his array, but hesitated to turn back, and walked with Don to the front smoking hall, where his friend left him to join a group of acquaintances. Peter, waiting for Don, turned back to-

ward the side foyer, and strolled down its length; with his hands deep in his pockets, he walked directly into Joan and her chaperon.

"Hello," she cried, "how are you?"

Peter felt very awkward indeed, but managed somehow to disengage his hands from his pockets in time to shake hands with her. He was then presented to the chaperon, to his great satisfaction, by name, unhesitatingly. People went by them and crowded them; they were a bit in the way, and Joan and her chaperon started forward a few steps. Peter set out to follow, not wanting to leave so abruptly, but as he came abreast of them, Joan smiled across at him, and so he continued walking with them. Within a dozen steps he was stricken with overwhelming dismay, and his hand flew to his neck, and fluttered confusedly about, trying to hide his collar. He looked at Joan, to find some trace of embarrassment in her face for his presence, but there was none; he was miserably conscious of himself in the parade of people, but evidently Joan had not noticed his slovenliness, or if she had seen it, she did not mind. It was reassuring, particularly since the chaperon did not seem to mind either, and Peter could find no trace of reproof on the faces of the people as they passed; gradually he forgot it, too, and strolled up and down with her, talking of music and Carver and college.

Finally they passed Don, who was looking for Peter, and he stared at them with so comical an

expression on his face that Peter could not help laughing. Joan asked him why he had laughed, and so he told her a little about Don, and Don's remark one afternoon at tea in Boston. It amused Joan tremendously, but Don was amazed and embarrassed to see her turn to look at him.

"You know, you said I might call on you," Peter said to her, "and I've wanted to awfully; but, to tell the honest truth, I'm afraid that I've been a little scared. . . . But I do want to!"

"I wish you would," Joan said. "There's really nothing to be scared of, unless you scare very easily, at anything. Of course there'll be a few girls looking at you, rather, from around corners, but they're all very proper. Anyhow, come and see."

Yet in Peter's satisfaction after the concert there was a disturbing doubt, a thought that perhaps Joan had noticed his unhappy suit and his soft, wrinkled collar, and had tried to appear as though she had not noticed them. But, to tell the truth, Joan had not thought of Peter's dress at all. To her, men's clothes were indistinguishably alike, and I think that unless a man had gone utterly nude, she would not have been able to tell wherein he was at fault with too much or too little. But Peter worried about it, and took himself severely to task.

Work dragged along; Peter went almost thoughtlessly to his classes, read a little of what he was told to read, and, for the most part, let the

warm rooms, the cold streets, the sun and wind and snow, noon and evening soothe him and rest him and keep him from thinking of anything very much, or taking anything seriously. It was a sort of interlude familiar to youth, when, after a season of endeavor and struggle the spirit sinks back to rest. It is rarer in grown men; they do not live as intensely as youngsters and so there are fewer struggles, and fewer hours of drowsiness. The desires and ambitions grow deeper and truer, but their expression becomes more tempered and more even, a steadier beat of endeavor, a slower but a more unfaltering stride. A man gathers momentum with his years, and then it is harder and harder to rest.

Peter promised himself solemnly that he would call on Joan before a fortnight had passed, a promise that satisfied him and yet did not worry him with any thought of fulfilling it, for a fortnight is a long time, and anything can happen in a fortnight. Indeed, something did happen—he chanced upon Joan at the Merle, alone at a round, brown table. He sat down with her, and wondered what to order; he wanted an egg mayonnaise sandwich, a remarkable thing, but extremely difficult to handle, full of small, smooth, yellow bits of egg that always fell out. He was afraid that he would disgrace himself, and so contented himself with a drink, and an easy straw.

They were speaking of New York when they rose to go.

"Helen Graff is from New York," Joan said, "and what is more, she rather likes you. She thinks that you're almost the awkwardest man she ever saw." Joan laughed delightedly, and Peter laughed because she did, although he did not see why Helen Graff should so admire awkwardness. Joan must have felt his thought, for she said, "You see, Helen is fearfully awkward and shy and embarrassed herself, and so I suppose she greets it gleefully in anyone else."

"Am I as bad as all that, really?"

"Well, perhaps not quite as bad. But you know you are awfully, awfully shy and quite forlorn and bewildered."

Peter rather wanted to feel hurt at that, but it was hard to feel hurt at it, even though there was some truth in it.

"Doesn't it embarrass you to meet a person like me?" he asked with a trace of what he hoped was bitterness in his voice.

"As a rule it does," she answered quickly, "but with you it was different. You were so forlorn, I wanted to pat you."

Peter laughed. He was not really ashamed of his unhappy manner. In any romance of his own contriving he would not willingly have been the bluff knight but the pathetic page. It was something he would never have admitted.

"I didn't think that Miss Graff was shy," he said. "In fact, that's all that saved me from . . . that's all that saved me."

"She is a bit queer that way, Mr. Kindred. She was really frightfully embarrassed, and when she is confused, she talks a great deal. . . . It wasn't at meeting you so much, but because I forgot your name."

They stopped before a red-brick dormitory that reminded Peter of the Harvard club houses. It was more delicate and more prim, and it seemed to be considering peaceful and chaperoned thoughts.

"Will you come in, Mr. Kindred?" Joan asked.

"I'd love to, but I have a lecture. Some other time?"

"Of course. I told you so before."

"There's just one thing," Peter said, and then stopped and gulped. "Oh, never mind," he murmured.

"What is it?"

"No—next time."

"Oh, don't be a child," Joan said impatiently. Peter frowned at her tone.

"Now I shall certainly wait," he said doggedly.

"I'm sorry," she smiled. "Wait if you wish. . . . Tell me."

"Well . . . I thought that you might call me Peter instead of Mr. Kindred," he said.

"Why, certainly, if you want me to. I would have anyway, after a while. You made an awful fuss about it."

Peter colored faintly. He knew that he had made an unwarrantable fuss about it.

"Good-bye," he said, and shook hands with her.

"Good-bye," she said, and went up the steps of the house. He turned away and started soberly back toward the Square, thinking that he was always awkward, and that she had not invited him to call her Joan, and that he would blunder along somehow, and call her Joan anyway, whether she liked it or not. But the thought kept coming into his mind that he would not have made such a bother about calling David David, or Frank Frank.

Peter visited Joan soon after, summoning, as he stood before the door of Bertram Hall, all the sense of masculine lordliness and all the scorn of things feminine that he could rouse in his nature to his aid. He found, finally, that he did not need them, for Radcliffe evinced no curiosity about him whatsoever; yet when Joan did come at last into the room, he felt more comfortable, and less open to some vague suspicion or other. It was a black day, and so they sat in the sedate reception room and talked. It is not my intention carefully to record their conversation together, or indeed, any of Peter's conversation; talk is a matter of no importance save here or there, when the talker becomes suddenly articulate. There is always at first some agreement on the weather, as though to test out voices, oil up vocal chords, settle the tone and volume of sound to be used. However, it is curious that as we grow older, there is more and more stress laid upon this preliminary tuning,

whereas in youth, or rather in childhood, we come at once to what is nearest our hearts.

Two Carverians cannot be together, unless they are old and established friends, without discussing Carver. Peter was made uncomfortable by Joan's knowledge of the man; she had by far a more technical grasp on economics than he had, and he wished that Don were with him, behind whose greater intelligence he might retire and reorganize. Finally, he was forced to admit the limits of his knowledge, and then Joan liked him a good deal, and took a sort of proprietary interest in him, that he could never have consciously aroused in her, no matter how he had tried. He would have thought once that such an intellectual submission would disgust him, but he found it unexpectedly pleasant and laughed a little at it, and felt proud of Joan. He learned of her own fame at Radcliffe with an odd satisfaction.

While they were talking, Helen Graff came in, and joined them. Peter liked her; she was a correct complement to Joan. They were both enthusiastic, but where Joan was cool and precise, her friend was ardent and vague. Peter thought that she was probably a woman with feelings, but that one could either bear with them, or else argue about them intelligently.

When Helen went, Peter commented again on her seeming lack of self-consciousness, and again expressed surprise that Joan should have called her shy.

"It seems so, doesn't it?" Joan said. "And yet, you are quite wrong about Helen. Do you know, Peter, I have seen her come from a dance, and cry."

It gave Peter a shock to hear Joan call him by name. That, and the astonishment at what Joan had said left him fairly mute. It was the first time that she had called him Peter, although he had called her Joan as manfully as he could early in the visit. As for Helen, it was unbelievable.

"But why on earth?" he murmured.

Joan shrugged her shoulders. "Just out of disappointment with herself. She always thinks that she has done badly. . . . But, do you know, I think that I should like to meet your friend, Don Mark. Shall I?"

"You certainly shall. That's splendid."

"I think that Helen would like to meet him, too."

"Great."

"We might have tea together, or lunch some day. I'm curious to see if I am really the sort of woman he can talk to."

"Lunch or tea, just as you say. At the Lantern—or in Boston?"

"Goodness, no! We could only eat at the Cock Horse."

"Right O. How would tomorrow do?"

Joan smiled. "You impatient creature," she said. "Tomorrow would not do at all. But the

day after . . . and let us make it tea, because luncheon is too businesslike."

Peter went back to Don in high excitement, and found him busily reading the financial section of the *Boston Transcript*. At such a sober sight Peter caught his exuberance and held it, and announced their tea engagement as casually as he could. Don pretended not to hear, but frowned heavily at his paper. So Peter repeated what Joan had said of Don. The paper fell at last, and Don stared at him open-mouthed.

"Holy suffering mackerel!" he cried, "did you tell the woman that? Then I shall certainly not go."

"Oh," said Peter airily, "as you say."

"Besides," grumbled Don, "I have to attend a class."

"Right," said Peter.

"Where are we to meet?"

The next day was newly pleasant to Peter. Through the drowse of lectures, the slow, warm hours, the small and intimate tasks, flowed a tide of contentment, rippled faintly with excitement. Peter thought that in Don, he himself was putting his best foot forward; that Joan would like Don for himself, and Peter the better for Don; that he would be making more certain their friendship, and that he would be showing Joan, besides, that after all, he was not entirely as unintelligent as she may have thought him. A dozen times during the day he had the mind to talk to Don about the

coming tea party and Joan and Helen, but laughed shame at himself for his boyishness. Yet at supper Don began talking about it, and Peter realized with amusement that Don was even more excited than himself, but Don hid it behind a mask of surly sarcasm.

The next afternoon, dressed with immaculate carelessness, they walked up Brattle Street together to the Cock Horse. As they settled into their seats at a table in a corner, Joan and Helen came in, red-cheeked, stamping light snow from their shoes. Peter jumped up and led them to his table, where Don was standing, half in confusion. Helen began to talk at once, but Joan sat down with a calm smile; she was entirely at her ease, and beckoned Peter to sit near to her.

"Helen very nearly didn't come," she whispered to him.

Peter whispered back, "Don wouldn't come either. But I couldn't have kept him away." They smiled at each other.

Don, answering Helen almost at random at first, grew interested in something she was saying. The waitress stood patiently behind them waiting for their order. Finally, Joan ordered for them, and a little later chocolate and toast and marmalade were brought to their table in quaint, heavy china. By that time the conversation had grown general. Then as Don was talking to Helen, she took a sip of chocolate, and gave it two quick chews before swallowing it. Peter caught Don's eye and

grinned so wickedly that Don grew fiery red and swallowed a mouthful of much too hot chocolate, and coughed and gasped, to Helen's horror, while Peter laughed unrestrainedly. When Don had got his breath back again, he shook his fist at Peter across the table, whereat Peter laughed more than ever. Helen was prettily worried about him and hoped that he wouldn't choke any more and offered him water; there was not any primness or constraint after that, but the four sat together in friendly warmth while the dusk grew outside and the shadows on the snow deepened into blue. Finally the talk came to music, through a number of things.

"You must certainly hear *Tod und Verklärung*," Helen said. "Mustn't they, Joan?"

"Isn't that very modern?" Don asked. "Strauss, or someone?"

"Heavens," Helen cried, "Strauss is old fashioned."

"I get very little out of the moderns," Don said frankly. "It's my own fault, of course. I don't understand them."

"Last week," Peter said, "during the last movement of the *New World* I absolutely sort of exploded, and bits of me kept floating around near the ceiling, bumping into the statues."

"So did I," Don admitted.

"I think you go mostly to hear those big trumpets like pretzels, what-you-may-call-'ems," Peter said.

Helen remarked that, of course, Dvorak was no modern, either.

"Well," Peter said, "I think that's the sort of thing music ought to be. It ought to make a man want to go out and work; it ought to fill him full of courage to live and produce and . . . breed, and all that. And poetry, too, and art." He wound up triumphantly, thinking of Jill.

"That's Carver, of course," Joan said.

"Most of the modern music I've heard . . . the really modern," Peter went on, "would just send a man to sleep or something."

"For the most part," Joan said, "I find the moderns rather bewildered emotionally, and almost pathetic, don't you think?"

"I suppose it's rather our fault," Don said. "It's all too complicated for us to follow."

"No," Joan answered, "It's a glorification of pure sensuousness. Don't you see, it's meant to be as unintelligible as perfume. We're not meant to follow it, but to sort of take a deep breath of it, and then let it mean something. Like a cubist picture."

Peter looked happily over at his friend. Helen was sitting beside him, her eyes shining with interest at the discussion, and Peter fairly bubbled with content at the manner in which the afternoon was passing.

"Besides," Joan was saying in her precise way, "don't you think that the majority of artists today are more intent on fame than on greatness?"

Fame lies in the public, you see, and greatness would lie in their own selves." She blushed the least bit and looked down at her plate. "I didn't just think of that," she said, "I thought of it a long while ago."

"It's awfully good, though," Peter said eagerly.

Joan smiled and went on. "I think perhaps there are too many famous men all expressing themselves as fast as ever they can, and setting a bad example."

"Why, Joan!" said Helen, surprised at her friend's earnestness.

"Yes, I do," Joan said defiantly, and sat up straight and prim in her chair, her cheeks pink.

"I do wish that David had met you," Peter said in a low voice to Joan. She looked at him vaguely, still troubled with the echoes of her own vehemence.

"David?" she asked.

"Well . . . he is in France now. A musician."

Later, as they went home together, Helen said to Joan. "You old bluffer! Whatever will they think?"

Joan walked happily along. "It was fun, though, wasn't it?" she said.

"Yes, very. Except for my conscience."

Joan laughed and squeezed Helen's arm. "Wasn't Peter funny and full of awe?"

"He's always that way. Did you like his friend?"

"Don Mark? Did you?"

Helen hesitated a moment and looked thoughtfully before her. "Very much," she said in a voice that seemed to be deepened by the very thinnest slice of tone.

At the same time, in his room on Holyoke, Don was stretching out his arms between one of the most brazen yawns Peter had ever seen. Peter, sitting at the edge of the old morris chair, his knees up under his chin, his fingers clasped about his ankles, was smiling up at Don half amused and half questioning. Don brought his clenched fists slowly up, up, and slowly down, while his mouth closed and his body relaxed. It was a stupendous bit of carelessness.

"Oh," he said, reaching for his pipe, "they're all right."

Peter had not answered his mother's last gossip letter. There had been other things he wanted to do at the time, and as the days went by and there seemed always to be other things of one sort or another, it was increasingly hard to sit at his desk, and gossip back. There was nothing to tell his mother; there rarely was, but he managed to find a bit of harmless incident here and there, and these he put into his letters. Now that his life seemed to have taken a sudden twist, he could think of nothing to talk of save Joan, and, unfortunately, nothing to say about her, for, indeed, he did have nothing to say about her, even to Don, and so, of course, nothing to his

mother. He wished to take nothing before his mother that was not definitely settled in his own mind; he felt that she played clumsily with his thoughts, and with his adventures, and, far from respecting them, was carelessly curious to pick them apart. So he kept from her any thought he was not entirely sure of, and gave her only those settled ideas she could juggle without hurting. It may be that if she had seen how unsettled Peter was for the most part, and how lacking in the arrogant confidence that he seemed to have, she would have been more tolerant of him; but I am afraid she would have been more curious, as well, and more intent on meddling.

Peter's silence was accepted quietly at home, but not without some bitter feeling of resignation. It was not unexpected, but it was misunderstood; for while Peter had no purpose in not writing, his mother and father thought that it was the outgrowth of his whole tendency away from them, and felt it keenly. His father started more than one letter to him, to beg of him to write to his mother, but an unhappy pride kept him from ever sending them.

Such a state of affairs never entered Peter's head. He was living idly, reading and talking, spending some hours in the rooms of acquaintances, Don's friends, or his own. It was not a very different Harvard from his own, that he found. For instance, there was one man intent upon philosophy, and another who was studying

to teach history; there was a group of Carverians, who knew Don slightly, and had heard of Joan; a musician, unlike David, sober and exact; an aesthete or so; one spirit mildly reminiscent of Frank. Few were entirely unknown to the others, and Peter himself was not a strange name to all of them. Some followed this man or that, some were intimate with professors, some lonely. All these men, with few exceptions, had passed through the same various phases of intellectual life that Peter had passed through, coming to college undecided, often thoughtless, though sometimes with a real bent, dipping casually into different theories, hearing rumors of one thing and another, tasting here and there, growing, developing, judging, comparing, slowly deciding. To such men college meant talk, books, professors, arguments, years of freedom to discuss and leisure to appreciate. To many, the clubs, the teams, the social events of Harvard were as far and strange as though they were of another land. For a while Peter could not understand why he had not known them before, had not found them out one by one, his earlier years, but in truth their earlier years had been much the same as his; they were men of few but significant friendships; they were developing when he was developing, and grew as he grew; if he had met them before, he would not have recognized their parallel trend to his.

He did not join forces with the other Carverians, as Don did. He listened to their talk, how-

ever, with deep interest, as he listened to the liberals. He found no reason to make small points clear. Underneath it all, all the talk, the argument, the activity of the different groups, the longing and the enthusiasm, it was given him to catch a stir of passing youth, of generations restless, gone before, of restless generations yet to come and to inherit his life there, the familiar halls, the paths, the walks, afternoons and evenings, the well beloved things. He thought of what Frank had said that afternoon in autumn, with the blue roof tops of Harvard before them, distant through the trees. He wanted a son to share in that inheritance.

Peter would have nothing of love, but he was less stern than Don. He had softened his views to allow for the general desirability of woman, although he still contended that romantic love was rot, and fit for children. He was willing to admit that there might be some deeper affection between a man and a woman than he could find in the friendship of two men, based upon his discovery in a woman of something strange and graceful, something attractive and bewildering.

"I do not accept this romantic twaddle about love at all," he said to Don, "and still I grant some indescribable feminine attractiveness. How you can consistently deny that is more than I can understand."

"If you were as logical as you think you are,

Peter my boy, you would see that you are confusing intellectual appreciation with silk stockings. Fie!"

"I'm not thinking of silk stockings at all," Peter answered hotly. "But what I say is that there is something more than a woman's intelligence to be considered. Something that isn't sensual, either."

"It isn't possible. There is only intelligence and sensuality."

"You can't say that of Joan." Peter looked at his friend steadily.

"I could—but I sha'n't. You wouldn't like it."

"Don't be absurd!"

"No, sir. I sha'n't say a word. But I will say this . . . If there's something in a woman that can't be placed in the intellect, and reached through intelligence, and something that can't be placed in the body and reached through debauch . . . why, then, it can't be reached at all, and you'll be jealous of it all the rest of your days."

"Not I. Jealousy is too dangerous a thing . . . uncontrolled emotion. Of course there is jealousy, but it has to be integrated."

Integrated was a word new to Peter's vocabulary. He had picked it up from one of the philosophers, and he enjoyed using it. Don smiled whenever he heard it.

After four days of biting cold that sent the passing students scuttling along Holyoke to and from the Yard, and brought out huge brown raccoon

coats from the closets of the patricians, Peter heard that there was skating on the Charles, and thought at once of Joan. He was afraid that Don would object to going along, and would not care to ask Helen, too, but he hoped that Don could be won over, for there was so much unfamiliar in taking any woman skating that he wanted some one else with him to share it. For a full morning he caught delicious glimpses of himself carrying Joan's skates down Boylston Street, while she walked beside him, and putting her skates on her, finally, at the bank of the river. That gave him the greatest pleasure of all, and he secretly enjoyed the faint blush it occasioned him.

He was immensely relieved to find that Don would go, and had, besides, no great objection to Helen going, too. Peter telephoned to Joan from the pharmacy between lectures, and heard his coin chink in the pay station, with a hollow and beating heart. Joan was delighted with the idea, and promised Helen's eagerness also, and so it was arranged. Peter would rather have written her a note, but he was afraid that the ice would not hold.

The day of their skating was bright and yellow and cold, and Peter found himself walking down Boylston Street with Joan, carrying her skates, quite as he had imagined he would, save for the difference that he was merrier and happier. Don and Helen swung along, a few paces behind them, and he could hear their talk and laughter. They

came opposite the power house and one of the boat clubs, and turned along the river bank. Before them, the Charles spread in a smooth, white sheet, shining and mottled, black with occasional deep water beneath the ice. A few eager muckers were playing at the edge of the ice, while further out across the river folk skated in the wind, in groups and alone, with flashes of color among hats and scarves. In the sun Joan sat on a bench and Peter knelt at her feet, fastening her shoes. He thought how bony and angular her feet were. She was not at all ashamed of them, however, and put them out boldly to be laced; when her skating shoes were on they looked trim and slender. Peter, with hands made awkward by the cold, laced his own shoes, and they scrambled to the ice and sailed together out across the river. Don and Helen, having fastened their own skates, were already ahead of them, moving in long, graceful strides. Peter tucked his hand under Joan's elbow; she bent her wrist and reached for it; they locked their fingers together and struck out after their friends.

Luckily enough, Peter skated well, for Joan went swiftly, and with the wind behind them they were flying over the smooth ice. The late winter sun beat a warm tattoo on their faces, and filled their eyes with yellow light.

"Isn't it splendid." Joan said, as they swept past Don and Helen, and waved back at them. "You skate very well. I'm glad of that . . . I

rather thought I'd have to pull you around, and we were sure that Mr. Mark would fall all over everything."

"Why," asked Peter, "do you always expect these things of me? Do I look so helpless and timid and . . . all that?"

"Well, yes, you do a bit," Joan answered him. "You look as though you smoked cigarettes and wrote poetry—not very good poetry—and danced."

"I smoke a pipe, and once in a while a cigar, after dinner, when I feel important . . . I enjoy that. I'd like to write poetry—even bad poetry, but I'd never be able to write even a jingle. No—and I don't dance. I used to, until people started to make a business of it, and then I gave up. I couldn't keep abreast of the new steps, and that made me seem awfully awkward and ignorant to everybody. But even now I can't help feeling that all this bother has gone on about dancing because it's just another way of being famous and social without bothering people's brains at all while they're being it."

"Yes," Joan said, "but, of course, there's more in it than that."

"There's always more in things than just the little I manage to say, but there's usually so much more that I'd never finish talking . . . so I just pick out one thing . . . whrup!" he cried as Joan stumbled and he caught her tightly to him, while with her whole weight on his arm she swept along

on one foot. After a moment they came into the rhythm of their stride again, but Peter still held her closely, and she was content at that, and grasped his fingers tightly. He felt faintly atremble, and thoughtful of her.

"It's my fault, of course," he told her. "I shouldn't have been talking so importantly, when we should be skating. I sha'n't talk again."

She smiled and gave his arm a friendly pressure that put him into splendid spirits with himself. They skated on more evenly and swiftly toward Watertown and Brighton, while the sun sank lower and lower and the afternoon drew near to dusk. Then they turned in a flashing sweep and started back again, past Don and Helen, who turned after them and raced them. Together they lengthened their stroke and put more power in it, and skated so for nearly a mile, until the other two gave up and coasted and drifted behind. They had unlinked their arms, holding each other by the hands to travel more swiftly; now they drew together again. Peter, half breathless, looked at Joan with shining eyes. The flight into the wind had whipped the color into her cheeks, and in the turning dusk her lithe young body skimmed beside him like some impetuous bird. Her chin was buried in the fur about her neck, and only her eyes answered him and then looked steadily ahead. He thought that he had never seen so delicately chiselled a being, and he felt his spirit grow wide and warm to make room for her.

It was afterglow when they came at last to the bridge again, and saw before them the boat houses, the distant lights of Boston, and the lambent broad windows of the power house, glaring with an uncanny emerald light through the winter evening. Beyond them towered the cold, white circle of the stadium, gray in the dim light, and behind them the sky was fading to a clear green, with one star bright in the west. In silence they coasted slowly to the bank, and Peter, with numbed fingers, knelt before Joan again and undid her shoes, while she looked soberly over his head at the river and the hastening forms of Don and Helen. He thought how lean and strong her feet were, how clearly etched, and hoped tremendously that they were not cold, so much, indeed, that he did not think how cold he was himself, his hands and feet, until from his tight skating shoes he struggled into his wide walking shoes and stood up, and then he could do no more than limp helplessly. Don and Helen drew near with a fine flashing of skates and ringing ice and laughter, and the four walked stiffly back toward the Square, their blood leaping through their young bodies, silent and content.

The upshot of their afternoon together was that they were to be friends. Helen announced the fact to Joan, and Don more clumsily gave Peter to understand as much. But neither Peter nor Joan did anything more than smile happily to

themselves, and hum a snatch of tune, as, on opposite sides of Cambridge, they went to their classes in the morning.

Joan, with candid suddenness, took Peter into her confidence and her friendship, though as for confidences, there was little of that, for Joan had no jealously guarded thoughts, and her simple, straightforward life was entirely apparent. On the other hand, for all that Peter had thought himself apportioned justly between Don and Frank and his lone, half forgotten love, and David, he found that there was an overwhelming part of himself he had not known was empty, and in that part Joan installed herself. Indeed, as the winter wore on, that part grew greater and greater, and began at last to urge dominion on the provinces ruled by his other friends.

They skated again, Joan and Peter alone, and then on a Saturday, the four of them, all day in the mellow sun, making a gleeful lunch of sandwiches and hot coffee from a thermos bottle Don had carried, far up the river toward Watertown. The next day, Sunday, Peter and Don were lonely and restless, and since Joan was in Boston, they carried Helen off for a long walk, and laughed and talked and strode the fearful afternoon away. In justice to Don it must be observed that he would as lief have walked with some philosopher or economist from his acquaintance, but Peter wanted to see Joan again, and although he could not, he thought he would see more of Joan in Helen than

in some argumentative upholder of the single tax, or no tax at all.

He called again at Bertram Hall, but without the need of masculine snobbery to sustain him, and rather enjoyed being peeked at by two girls with solemn eyes, before Joan came down. Sometimes they walked out Brattle Street together, past Longfellow's house, past gardened and well-arched homes that Peter envied for their gentleness, their trees and lawns, and the air of years about them. From such walks they came back at tea time, and sat together in a corner of the Cock Horse, talking in low voices, and patiently wishing that there were more toast and marmalade. Often they met in the Square, and then Peter went with Joan upon her errands and sometimes cut a class to walk her back to Radcliffe again. Sometimes he met Helen, and more than once with Don along the three of them trudged about the country while Joan steadfastly attended to her lectures. Little by little they grew to frequent the Cock Horse, and to consider one table there at lunch-time their own private property, but it was rarely that the four lunched together, as their hours fell differently, but more often two of them, or three. But all the time neither Peter nor Don said any word to each other about either Joan or Helen.

Snow had fallen lightly over Cambridge, a thin covering, but enough to spoil the skating soon after their full day on the river. A week later a

great storm swept upon Cambridge, blowing slanting flakes of snow driving from the north, piling drifts and smothering the roofs for three days. At the end of it the clouds tattered into flying gray strips, the sky welled blue again, and the sun sparkled and shone on the deep coverlet of white that weighed down the branches of trees, and stood out fatly upon the roof tops, like some impossibly gorgeous meringue upon a pie.

The snow changed the walks to afternoons at Bertram Hall, with the famous mistress of the Hall taking her dignified tea in her small room nearby them, or sometimes among the shops of Boston, when Joan needed a bit of china or a candlestick or a print. Sometimes, not often, she telephoned to Peter when she wanted his company, and he put everything aside to go with her. He enjoyed their shopping adventures; to walk together along Tremont or Boylston Street, with people hurrying by, and just a touch of briskness in the wind and in the sun on the snow; to go importantly into shops and stare wisely at luxurious trifles, and then go importantly out again. Peter could never have done such a thing alone, but Joan was to the manner born.

"Tell me why," he asked her, after they had been admiring a very old brass candlestick in a quaint shop, "an old thing is always so much more expensive and desirable than a new one?"

"Don't you see any difference, yourself, Peter?" Joan challenged him.

"Very little, I must admit . . . except that a new one looks shinier . . . and more made."

"Well, that's it, really. The love of antiques is a sort of culture, an appreciation of things that seem somehow to have happened, and not to have been made."

"Yes, I see . . . only that it seems to be rather an attempt to get away from the work bench."

"I suppose it is."

"That isn't very Carverian, is it?" Peter asked soberly.

"Not if it's carried to an extreme, of course."

"I knew a chap my first year," Peter said, "who sent all over England for a certain shade of leather to bind a book. He wanted it to match a tie he liked. He was an awfully silly ass."

"Well?" Joan said.

"I don't mean to draw a perfect analogy. But would you say that an old candlestick on your mantelpiece would make you more efficient than a new one? Or that you'd be healthier because you ate your dinner from an old table . . . at great expense? No, it's just a waste." And then Peter went on very logically to outargue Joan upon the matter of the value of antiques, and when she had admitted the indubitable logic of his argument he was highly pleased with himself, but it took not a mite of pleasure away from his excursions into the shops with her, nor did it detract at all from the flavor of his tea afterward. Joan bought no old furniture, and neither did he. As for Peter,

he would have been just as happy wandering in a toy shop, if Joan were along, pricing and appraising in her certain voice, at his side.

But finally Joan, a bit conscience-stricken at the days that went by so idly, went sensibly to work again, and so upset Peter by her quiet and serious determination to waste no more time, that, after upbraiding himself in round, Carverian terms for his slothfulness, he plunged furiously into his studies, working so late at night that once or twice he fell asleep over his books. His enthusiasm, in turn, stirred Joan to exaggerated effort, which was not good for her. When the two met, they talked over their courses. The fact that they were both so intent upon study, made work more pleasant for each one, added to the welfare of their consciences, and gave them a feeling of companionship; they set themselves all the more sternly to their reading. Often at midnight, the house hushed, the streets below his window ghostly still, Peter, at his desk, thought of Joan facing her task courageously, and grew energetic and light-hearted at the thought. He knew that they were both living at last quite according to their beliefs, and the more tired he grew, the more his spirit drove him happily on. There was a new note of sympathy between them, a new loyalty and thoughtfulness. When Joan's eyes grew tired and her head was held less proudly on her slim neck, Peter went soberly to his classes, with a troubled face.

It lasted a fortnight. Then Joan, unused to the long hours she had been spending at her books, yet urged on unusually through her weariness by her pride before Peter, caught cold, and went quietly home with a fever, there to lie in a tossed bed beside Helen's flowers, while Peter sat blankly at his desk and wondered idly what the books and the papers might be that lay folded so neatly and familiarly there. Joan was at home for a week, and Peter, after the first day or so, made a half-hearted attempt to go sternly to work again, but it came to nothing and trailed away into absent-mindedness.

Joan returned wanly to Bertram Hall, with a doctor's implicit orders that she be decently sparing of her work, and Frank came to Boston, out of the north.

CHAPTER VII

AT AN outlandish hour Frank came thundering up the spindly stairs in a rush of cold morning, and fell upon Don, to Peter's startled satisfaction, for it gave him a chance to be half way to his door before it was flung open and Frank swept in. His heavy coat was as fresh and cold as the early and windy streets outside; Peter was hugged to its rough surface, and then was whirled back with Frank to Don's room, where that gentleman lay in an aggrieved pile on the floor, wondering through his sleepiness if it had really been Frank he had heard.

The three of them breakfasted royally at the Lantern, where Frank was welcomed hardly less happily by Susan and Mrs. Prentis. Susan, in fact, remembered that he had always asked for two pots of particularly thick cream for his cereal, and she brought him two as though he had never been gone, to Peter's envy.

Frank was full of his own adventures, but first of all he must know the history of his two friends.

"I'm a Carverian now," Peter told him, and he shook his head sorrowfully.

"Oh, oh!" he cried, and pointed an accusing finger at Don.

They were both intensely glad to have Frank back again. He had not changed a whit from his old self and he made Peter feel as though he had not changed either, as though nothing had changed, as though nothing ever would.

After breakfast Don went off to a lecture, and Peter told Frank everything there was to tell, all that had happened to him, to Don, the gossip of Harvard, Joan and Helen. Frank installed himself in his old room, emptied his valise over a chair, and sprawled out on the window seat. After a while it was hard to believe that he had not always been there.

Finally he told Peter why he was in Cambridge.

"I've given up trying to make a business man of myself," he said. "I don't fit in. So I'm coming down here again for a Ph.D., and then . . . I shall probably teach."

Frank a teacher! It was a startling idea, and one that Peter could not stomach at all. It was entirely incongruous to put Frank among professors. At Peter's dismay Frank laughed gleefully.

"That's the way I felt about it, too, at first, until I realized that I was never going to have any day but Sunday to myself for the rest of my life . . . Sunday, and such holidays . . . And then I put my foot down. Think what it means, Peter,

my lad . . . the only day given you to enjoy the sunlight and the wind and the trees and the whole country, is to be forever Sunday, overrun with honest families making honest noises. And the rest of your life sitting at a desk, and going to bed at night. It's not for me. I shall sit at a desk at night and walk when the sun is up, and do my share of the world's thinking out in the open air . . . except in winter . . . and even then. And besides, I may do some good, making fiery speeches against Carver."

Peter felt very differently toward the busy mills and offices, but he could not find it in his mind to blame Frank for anything, although he would have argued with anyone else.

"Do you know, Peter," Frank went on to say, "I grew to hate the people around me. They had no faculty for idleness; they couldn't enjoy a darn thing."

Peter smiled at the old Frank who was so familiar to him. He would not have disputed with him for a fortune. It would have been an impudence against the years behind him. But it gave him a deal of pleasure to feel such a tiny bit of tolerance in himself, and to know that he was silent only because he wanted to be. And because he was glad to be.

Frank's coming made work even more unlikely for Peter. It was impossible, of course, to sit at home while Frank and Don went tramping, or to let Frank adventure in Boston alone; such things

were of more moment than forty pages of foreign exchange. The three spent their time living over the past years together. The very first night they went to Wirth's again, and Peter grew fairly boisterous.

He was anxious to have Frank meet Joan. Somehow, Frank's approval belonged to her, as her due. Besides, he wanted to show her to Frank as though to say: See here, I have grown and matured as much as this. But he disliked his own eagerness, which seemed boyish to him, and quite an opposite to what he wanted Frank to think him. Because of it he waited until it was almost time for Frank to go north again, before he took him to the Cock Horse to meet Joan and Helen. But afterward, for all his scheming, he was so truly eager to have Frank talk about her, that Don and Frank both burst out laughing at him, and covered him with confusion, and his stumbling explanation served only to add to it.

"There is something in me," he said to Joan later, "which never grew up. It's a childishness, a sort of inferiority . . . as though I had to be always praised, or I'd feel badly. Could it be breeding, do you think?"

"I hardly think so," Joan said, "although I don't know much about it. It might be just a lack of confidence in yourself, you know. The sort of thing that sensitive children get when they first begin to realize that older folk are people just like themselves, only bigger and wiser . . .

and then they lose it again as soon as they find the older folk aren't so awfully much bigger and wiser after all. Perhaps you never grew up so far."

"Yes, I did," Peter avowed, "I grew up at Exeter, and I kept on growing. But that part of me didn't change. . . ."

"Why do you think it might be breeding, Peter?" Joan asked.

"My parents are like that, and their parents were. People who aren't what they know they ought to be, and what they want to be. . . . I don't know. There's something there, I think, that won't be downed by any will to down it. . . ."

Joan smiled, and said:

"The mind is always fighting that sort of thing. But it takes a few generations to make a real success of it."

"Do you know, Joan, I think perhaps just such an upward trend in generations is the thing that makes a work-bench philosophy so splendid. I could work pretty hard, thinking my son would be a greater man than I, and still no more than what's in me . . . and my wife."

"Peter," Joan asked suddenly, "haven't you ever wanted a son to come after you in Harvard?"

"Awfully, Joan."

"I have, too, Peter. You're right about working hard. I think the bitterest thing in the world would be not to be able to send my daughter to Radcliffe. That is, next to having no daughter."

They were silent for a long while. Peter looked thoughtfully at Joan. She was very dear to him, and what she had said hummed in his heart, like a secret shared with a beloved friend.

That night Frank went north again, and when he was gone, Peter and Don, of a sudden, were a year older.

Peter rather resented being a year older, after all. He disliked the fact of having so long ago spent his freshman season, and wished vaguely that he were not hurrying so fast across that lustrum of his years. The summer he had passed abroad was gone; he did not want it to be so entirely gone. For a while he regretted David keenly, and felt, in his loss, how inevitably life was sweeping him along. He felt guilty, too, after a fashion, that he had let David grow discouraged and come to nothing. It ended by his writing David a long letter, but as he wrote he thought of what Joan had said to him of greatness and fame, and he hardly knew what to say to David then.

"It is the sort of day I know you would enjoy," he wrote. "The sun is full, up and down Mount Auburn, and all of Cambridge has been piled high with snow for nearly a week. Remarkably enough, there is no slush, and the snow is too deep for mud. There are sleighbells and wind and the clink of open goloshes.

"What of you, David? Are you still a garret-
eer? And did you find your great man? You
must know Paris marvelously well by now, and

you must be full of adventures. But is it so much easier to express yourself, after all? Don't you struggle as you used to do? I'm curious, quite frankly.

"I'm very old and wise. You never took Babbitt in Comp Lit., but the course was made for you. I was introduced to your ivory tower, but it was after you had gone. Otherwise . . . well, I doubt I should have let you go so easily. You should have found your music in your own self, David . . . not in the quietness of your life, but in its rebellion.

"I had no mind to preach. But I was thinking of the woman who told me once that greatness lay inside one's own self, and fame outside. I wish you had met her. Quite slim, with ruddy hair and pale blue eyes—almost gray—really gray sometimes, and a sort of windy, clean-hitting mind, sudden and frank. My meeting her is a long story. . . . I've no idea how we ever came to be friends. She's a woman of New England—a senior at Radcliffe—I can hear all New England talking in her voice—orchards, rocks, villages and churches.

"I have too much to tell you, ever to hope to do it coherently. Frank is coming back for a Ph.D. next year; he is disgusted with business; another ivory tower. Don lives in his room . . . and Harvard goes on. I love it—I shall hate like fury to graduate.

"I hope you've not taken to modern music.

We've had a great deal of it here in Boston. Oh—I'm quite a critic now . . . I have a Symphony seat. Isn't it absurd! I even have a theory about modern music. Do you remember when I couldn't hum a tune?

"I have been thinking of those old days, of Exeter, and of our freshman year. You're lucky to be a musician, David. There's a lot I'd want to write, if I could. I'd write an American symphony, first, and you'd be the hero of it, but I'd keep you here in America and give you an awfully hard time and doubt and bewilderment and discouragement and then—Yoicks! a really tremendous ending, every instrument working like mad, the conductor waving up and down and jumping around, and the drums banging away for dear life.

"You never knew Harvard, but you would have, if you had stayed. The real Harvard means Radcliffe. I would have laughed at that once. It means Radcliffe, and Belmont and Waverly—Brattle Street, the tea houses—the Charles in winter—skating—Boston, the shops along Boylston Street—the Symphony—oh, a host of things that you and I never dreamed of.

"Write to me of your garret in Paris. . . . It must be wonderful."

Joan, under orders to deal lightly with her work, turned fairly helplessly to Peter, with the result that few days went by in which they were not together some part of the time. She had given up

her dramatic work entirely. She said there was too much else to do and to think about; that explanation she offered Helen, and for a while Helen, realizing better than Joan how little it was true, was angry and worried. But after Helen and Don had talked the matter over at lunch, she began to think seriously about it, albeit with a twinkle in her eyes, and made a particular point of discussing Peter whenever Joan would, and that was often, and tried to meet Peter, too, and to talk to him. Don was sarcastic; but Helen was faintly thrilled.

In March it was still winter in New England, the brown earth lost beneath ice, as though it never would be otherwise; Peter and Joan, red-cheeked, muffled and bundled and snowy. Don and Helen sat indoors and studied in their various rooms, or met at lunch, but Peter and Joan preferred to be out of doors if they could; they had talked a great deal together, about all manner of things, and it was pleasant just to be with each other in Cambridge and in Boston again. It was good to be side by side, without talk, in a wind, arm in arm over slippery places. It was better than to be sitting always opposite each other, in a corner, talking and arguing.

Then, at the end of March, Tod und Verklärung was announced in a Symphony program, and Helen proceeded happily to make an event of it. It was to explain a great many things in music that she had been unable to make clear, to fill,

somehow, an empty place in Don's enthusiasm. She went over it carefully in advance; she was anxious for Don to enjoy it thoroughly, and was prepared to be intensely disappointed if he did not. Peter, catching a flash of her enthusiasm, felt as though something were to happen, almost as he had used to feel before a big game. But Joan, in turn, was slyly amused at Helen. She had a mind to talk to Peter about it, and laugh with him at Helen's anxiety for Don, and yet, for a reason inexplicable to herself, she hesitated, and thought better of it. She was not accustomed to demureness in herself; it puzzled her. But she knew, nevertheless, that if she made a mock of Helen's affection for Don before Peter, she would not be able to hold her face up to him while she mocked. It half vexed her to feel so; but it was half pleasant, too.

On the night of the concert, winter broke sluggishly, and a wind that was not a winter wind blew steadily out of the west. In it there was a hint of brown, wet earth again. The two men rode in to Boston, a feeling of adventure stirring in Peter's body. Don had little to say; his thoughts were not upon music, but at his desk, where his work was piled high, and among his neat notes. He did not remember a tithe of what Helen had said; even then he had listened to her absently, wondering while she spoke of music, how best to undertake his own problems of study, and settle them before spring. Don and Peter entered the

hall without comment, and took their seats together.

The symphonic poem was played last of all; after it was over, the two men went silently with the crowd out of the hall. Helen was sleeping with Joan in Boston that night. They waved to Don from a lighted motor, and were gone. Peter had not seen them. Under the lamp-light people crowded against him and eddied past; motors drew up at the curb; there was noise and hurrying. Peter hardly heard it. He was aware of the wide street, and the night, and insistent movement. Don took his arm and they walked slowly up Massachusetts. An acquaintance called to them from his motor; it came throbbing up beside them, and they clambered into the back seat. There they were isolated, quiet. The motor sped smoothly forward toward the bridge, and the wind rushed into their faces.

On the bridge they came into the full sweep of the night. The sky was bellied with stars across the zenith. A hollow of solemn wind was above them; the river below, suddenly gleaming, and then lost; and all about them were darkness and the twinkle of far-off lights. The car thrummed down the river road, gathering speed along the unlighted track, its lamps flaring on ahead. Across the water lay Boston, a gray of thin moonlight upon roofs, darkly shadowed with streets. It was a night when the sea comes close, when cities steal insensibly together, when men are not lonely and

strange to one another any more, but live and love together; their pulses beating bravely a fine tattoo into the infinite abyss. Or so it seemed. And Peter, throwing back his head at last, with the full power of his lungs sang the final great sentence of the symphony, the *Verklärung*, rising up, up, up to a triumphant insistence of faith, discovered and determined.

That night, for the first time, Peter dreamed of Joan. They were in Switzerland somehow; there was a cottage; Joan was kneeling before a tiny fire of faggots. And then they were in Cambridge again, and he was losing Joan. Inarticulate, miserable, he pleaded with her. She did not go, and he kissed her. He woke up in love with her.

It was an awakening more strange than any he had ever known. He was suddenly wide awake; bed was intolerable. He was full of some wild and startled energy that struggled in him to be let loose, but he did not know how to loose it. He wanted to sing, a torrent of notes, without meaning. He moved slowly, as though his movements were delicious and incomprehensible; he sat for long spaces of time staring at the wall, at his desk, at the cover of a book, attentive, as though listening for something.

His heart weighed nothing, but it took up the entire space of his breast. He could plainly hear its beating. He wanted to cry out to someone that

some marvelous thing had occurred to him. Finally he stood before his window, looking down at Holyoke in the early morning sun, glowing through the pane of glass onto his face. He stretched his arms wide above his head and laughed deeply, from the very bottom of his being.

"Lord!" he cried, "Lord!" And then suddenly he grew sober and thoughtful, and a rush of tenderness overwhelmed him.

There was nothing as it had been in Cambridge. Everything was entirely changed, but wherein, he could not say. Overnight it had taken to itself whatever of glory Venice may have had, or Florence, or Rome, or Paris. There were no other cities but Cambridge. There were names, uninhabited, somewhere north and south and west. New York was one of them. Skeletons lived there . . . what old, old skeletons!

The sight of Don at breakfast sobered him abruptly. His voice trembled as he greeted him, and he made a great business of eating his breakfast, lest he be caught in talk. It would have been impossible for him to talk; there would have been no breath for his voice. He smiled almost continually; he could not help it.

He was torn between the desire to see Joan at once, and the fear of seeing her, for he knew that he was not master of his breath. That Joan did not love him was a matter of no importance to him. Indeed, he would have been amazed and horrified at the thought of himself importunate for

her love; the remarkable fact to Peter was that he himself was in love. Like some whirlwind, it had swept him clear of everything, all talk and argument, all experience, and it filled and drenched every nook and cranny of him. That was enough. If Joan had come to him then and offered him her love, I think it would have wreaked havoc with him; it would have been an unfortunate thing; he would not have known how to accept it.

After breakfast Peter went back to his room, up Mount Auburn Street. Winter had, indeed, broken; the wind was fresh and warm, and blew steadily. At his feet runnels of melted ice trickled into the gutter; between the blocks of paving stone the earth was soft and drenched and muddy. There was a sunny odor of wet trees, of stirring earth, the sleepiness and drowsiness of slow awakening orchards over all New England, in the wind that blew so brightly in his face. It brought him the half remembered fragrance of roads and fields and old stone walls in Waverly, from Wellesley, from Providence and Springfield, far-lying in the sun, blown upon by that same wind. He stood on his doorstep a long while loath to go indoors. His room was warm and close; he sat at his desk, and the stretch of shining sky above the south, over the river he knew must be sparkling in the sun, the wind moving there across the clear sky, the murmur of water dripping and splashing from the roofs, all called him out again. There was noth-

ing to do in his room. He went out, to walk a long way.

As he walked, the ecstasy of his spirit died away within him, insensibly into a faint depression, curiously akin to an old sadness he had known in Exeter, a sadness because the earth was beautiful. This, too, died away, and he grew tranquil and proud, save only that in his tranquility was woven a fierce longing to be with Joan again, and a memory of the dreamed kiss. He wanted to go to her at once, and yet intuitively he knew it to be impossible, that it would torment him.

There was not much time left him before the spring holidays . . . a few days. He thought that he would give himself a day of grace, in which to consider himself, and after he would go to Joan.

It was a luxury to think she was fond of him, and he doled it out to himself sparingly. He remembered incidents of their intimacy, when she had whispered to him some quaint confidence, or when she had smiled at him in frank affection. He was a boy in love; it was as though his life had been of a sudden heroically consecrated.

He turned and came back along the river. It was Sunday; the quiet of the day he had once so disliked, possessed him. A single church bell tolled faintly and far off, toward Corey Hill. In his own spirit was the sun, the steady blowing of the wind, the fresh lapping of water, the fragrance of the earth.

"No one told me it would be this sort of thing," he said; "no one at all."

That night he sat in Don's room, talking until very late. He did not want to let the day leave him, to go to bed and so let the night drift off into nothing. He talked of Helen and Joan, of Joan with a certain hesitancy, that Don, however, did not notice. He wanted to confess his love to Don, and yet he wanted to hide it from him. He felt diffident before Don, young, overcharged with emotion. So he sat and talked generally and aimlessly. He had no stomach for a discussion; he wanted only to be awake, talking himself to sleepiness. He tried to get Don to talk about Helen.

"She's mighty fine," Don said. "A bit emotional." It was his only criticism; he seemed to be more interested in economics.

Peter went into his own room finally, and soberly undressed. Once in bed, he fell asleep almost directly. Late the next morning, the telephone, ringing in the empty house, awakened him. It was Joan, to ask him if they might have lunch together. His mind, waking from heavy sleep, half forgot that he was in love.

To see Joan again puzzled him. She sat across the table from him, entirely familiar, and yet his thoughts as he watched her were tangled and confused, as though they belonged to a stranger. His confidence before her was gone; the old thoughts beat against a strange wave of humble-

ness, and sank at her feet. He watched the effect on her of whatever he said, eagerly, his mind continually struggling to assert itself as it had been accustomed to do, his spirit timorous. He was as nervous as a child who knows that something is expected of him before a group of people, and, alarmed, he tried not to show it. But when at last Joan would do no more talking, and sat watching him soberly, then, despite himself, all of Peter Kindred swept up into his eyes and glowed there, half pathetically. He smiled as though he had been whipped, and Joan, stirred and troubled, looked away.

It was their last meeting before Peter went home, and after it, she went thoughtfully to her room, and shut herself in there, staring quietly through her window at the gaunt trees and the dark earth. Helen knocked at her door, and she did not answer, but repented of it afterward, and went at last into Helen's room to find her friend.

"Helen," she asked, "have you ever seen a man in love? What did he look like?"

Don went home with Peter to New York, and Peter was glad of that. He was coming home differently, affectionately. He had grown suddenly toward manhood; he had been touched with humility and with humanity. Yet he wanted to take with him his life in Cambridge, and that was very nearly Don. He felt that with Don beside him it would be easier to be kindly, and so it turned out,

for there was a certain awkwardness in his father's greeting, that would have approached sullenness if it had not been so mingled with curiosity for Peter's guest. Indeed, Mr. Kindred, unlike his wife, had neither forgotten nor forgiven Peter his neglect. Neither he nor his wife understood at all the manner of Peter's development, but when the older man called his son ungrateful and selfish, the mother could not find it in her heart really to blame Peter, and laid her unhappiness at the door of what she vaguely considered a misunderstanding between them. He was her son. So Mrs. Kindred hugged Peter no less fondly upon his return, and if she watched him anxiously, it was from eagerness to find what she, with patient and thoughtless faith, knew would some day be there, the expression of all that she considered splendid in a man.

Edith, upon the other hand, had long ago forgotten her feud with Peter, and liked him for bringing Don home, whom she legitimately might enheroize. For that matter, the whole family made something of a hero of Don; it was always their first reaction toward intelligent strangers.

Peter, with Don there, was happy to be home, and that was soon evident to his family. He spent occasional hours gossiping with his mother, he discussed business with his father, he listened to Edith's talk of social affairs. He was no longer at odds with them; he felt that he had stepped out of their group, and that he might visit them

almost as a stranger would, courteously. There was, besides, an affection for them, that, uninhibited by any struggle to get away from them, made it pleasant merely to be with them, to watch the course of their affairs, to take an impersonal interest in their problems which were no longer by any possibility his problems. It seemed to him that he came from a different life, on leave of absence, to consider simple questions of a lesser life.

So Peter felt, but his family saw only his courtesy, and felt only his kindness. To them it was quite as though the boy of days before Exeter had grown up as they would have wished him, father and mother fearing—a bit more poetic, perhaps, and impractical. It brought a sort of pompous satisfaction to the father, as though, somehow, he had been responsible for it, and to the mother the quiet happiness of justification. In turn it pleased Peter greatly that his parents were satisfied, and caused him to feel lordly and potent, at his easy ability to create such harmony. Looking back upon the troubledness of the past years, he was inclined to blame himself severely for that trouble, and for the lack of what he called a sense of humor. He thought that he had acquired a sense of humor, and attributed his gentleness to that. As a matter of fact, Peter never did acquire a sense of humor, all his life long.

Unlike the occasion of Frank's visit once before, Peter felt no shame in his family or in his

home. Don would understand; there was no apology needed. These were natural people; such homes were many, and necessary and important. He no longer felt that a criticism of his family was also a criticism of him; there was growing in him what was later to be a pride in the humbleness of his beginnings. Translated, perhaps his thoughts at that time would have been: I am born to greater things. Lo, my birthplace, and my family, my earliest environment, my origin!

Nor was he restless in the small flat, for in Don, there was something of Cambridge, its quiet, its distances—all of it, indeed, excepting Joan.

But Joan was constantly in his mind, a serene presence. He tried not to talk of her, but he could not help it, he must needs describe her to his mother, but casually, very casually. Mrs. Kindred's heart warmed as he talked, that he should be confiding in her; it was quite happily correct, and was included in the whole duty of a son. She had always expected to be confided in, ultimately. As for Peter, it was a joy merely to say aloud to some one of Joan that her eyes were so and so, and her hair so and so, and to make light of their friendship while his full heart mocked at him, his full heart and his mother, too, for since she wanted to be confided in, she would not have Joan anything less than her son's love—as she would have said, his sweetheart. How he would have hated her if she had really said the word aloud!

In the intimacy of their life together in New

York, Peter could not keep his secret longer from Don, and confessed his love for Joan at last, in the close darkness of the bedroom they shared together. When he had spoken he lay still and held his breath, waiting for a pealing organ to fill the darkness with music, waiting for some great thing to happen; but in his heart he doubted that there would be even a fitting solemnity in Don's reply, and as the silence grew and Don made no stir, he was sorrier and sorrier that he had spoken and felt younger and younger with each successive moment. Finally he gulped.

"Don?" he ventured, with a laugh he hoped was light.

Don moved slowly in his bed.

"Akh!" he said.

But in the morning, on their way to the dining room, he put his arm lightly over Peter's shoulder, and gave him a pat, and during breakfast Peter saw Don looking at him intently.

It was Don who arranged the afternoon with Helen, a play, and tea afterward at the Plaza. He did it all quietly enough, and surprised Peter with the whole plan arranged and completed, the tickets bought, the Plaza selected for tea, and the day of the affair itself only a night away. Peter was astounded and overjoyed, and all the more so because he had forgotten that Helen lived in New York, and the realization of it was amazing.

“Why,” he cried to Don, “it’ll be a regular old reunion!”

How was it that he had not even thought of it before? It would be almost like seeing Joan again.

Yet he was sobered and made thoughtful by a faint opposition in his parents, an opposition he felt although it was not openly expressed, out of politeness to their guest. In his father’s silence Peter read condemnation of such extravagance, and in the aggrieved air of both Edith and her mother there was more than a hint that Edith should have been asked to go. But Peter would rather not have gone at all than have taken Edith.

Since Don was in his confidence, even though that confidence had been fairly unfortunate, the meeting of the three of them held an unusual charm of intimacy to Peter. For certainly, Helen knew of whatever fondness Joan had for him, and even though he knew that she would say nothing about it, and though he did not even dream to capture the slightest hint, the unspoken secret between them, in which Don shared, endeared Helen to him. And there was, of course, a flavor of Cambridge in their meeting as they had so often done, a flavor of Cambridge, of pleasant and familiar things in unfamiliar surroundings. When they saw each other in the lobby of the theater, Helen’s evident delight at being with them again warmed the cockles of his heart.

Don was justly bored with the play, but Peter

was in no mood to be bored with anything. There was a sweetened love scene that he enjoyed tremendously, as he had enjoyed such things in the picture theaters a year before; one half-guilty glance at Helen by his side comforted him, for she was evidently as emotionally flushed at it as he. Beyond her, Don brooded sarcastically; the hero on the stage registered the deepest agony at an unexpected misfortune to his passion, and Peter let his thoughts sweep out of New York in a wide, swift arc, and land sweetly in Boston. After the last curtain he followed Don slowly along the crowded aisle, feeling the evening chill reaching in from the opened doors; to Don's grumbles he said nothing at all. Don was right, quite right, but Peter had had a very pleasant time, nevertheless.

The three friends walked home arm in arm across the park through the damp April evening. Don's thoughts were bent bitterly upon government and people; Peter was thinking happily of Joan, and Helen was, too.

But the home-coming was not to be entirely without unpleasantness. That night Edith went to a dance, and the following day she was important with society matters. The most pressing of these she imparted at luncheon; the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer of ribbons had been heard to observe that anyone at that dance was certainly declass  , that it was a distressingly bourgeois affair. This effectively had damned the evening,

but Peter, ascertaining that the daughter of the ribbon king had herself hugely enjoyed the dancing and the chicken salad, became impetuously disgusted.

"The dirty little brat!" he cried. He would have said more, but that Don sat opposite him, smiling quietly. Don's amusement made Peter ashamed, but Peter's outburst had stirred the family to a faint sense of discord again. It was not that they disagreed with Peter wholly in his opinion of that beribboned arbiter of society, but that they entirely objected to hearing anyone described as a dirty brat, particularly a young lady who could trace her family back for two generations, whose father was an extremely able business man; a young lady, besides, who stood for something definite in society, and always looked quite clean. It moved them to a sudden doubt if Peter was after all so much the creature they had hoped he would be.

The day before college opened there was a letter on his plate at breakfast; he knew at once that it was from Joan. Thrills made tremulous his stomach; breakfast was intolerably long; he bolted his coffee, and went into his own room. It was a short note, but Joan's signature at the end held him entirely in thrall. He read the letter twice; there was just a bit of news of Boston, and a naïve wish to see him again, and then her name, Joan. He was staring at it when Don came in, and laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Well, old one," he said, "tell me about it."

Peter shrugged his shoulders. "What is there to tell?" he asked.

"How did it happen?" Don asked.

"I woke up with it."

"Splendid . . . after a dream?"

"Yes."

"And then you thought you were in love?"

Peter objected to Don's use of the word thought.

"Well," Don said, "you woke up in love."

"Yes."

"What do you mean by 'in love'?"

Peter pondered over the question. "I don't know," he said finally. "I can't reduce it to anything logical. She simply swept right through all of me."

"Peter," Don said gravely, "didn't I hear you make mince meat of just such illogical love a while ago?"

"This isn't romantic love, Don," Peter said very earnestly. "Anything but that."

"Ah. You mean then that after your dream you woke up and realized that Joan would make an excellent mother, and a sensible wife. The sort of woman you wanted."

"Hmm . . . Oh, I knew all that before. I woke up and . . . well, I was in love."

Don smiled faintly. "And Joan?"

Peter shook his head. "I have no idea," he said; "what do you think?"

"I? Nothing, Peter, nothing at all. I have no

idea, really. I imagine that she's fond of you."

Peter could not help smiling at that, half pleased.

"I sha'n't argue with you about love," Don went on. "You know what I think of it. I think it's darn foolishness . . . but Joan is fine, and you could hardly do better. What do you plan?"

"Glory—I have no plan! Why, Joan isn't in love with me."

Don shook his head impatiently. "Fiddle," he exclaimed. "You sentimental child. Do you expect her to wake up, too, some morning and clutch at her heart and sing out, Heavens, I'm in love! She'll marry because she knows that the particular man she's marrying is the best chap for her."

Inwardly Peter writhed at that; it was a fearfully Carverian thing to say, and he hated and feared the possibility of it, for he knew that Joan would never choose him, and that unless she did miraculously awake some morning as Don doubted she ever would, and find herself in love, his would be a hopeless affair. Don went on thoughtfully.

"There's no reason why your parents and hers shouldn't help you to get started, you know."

"Yes, they ought to help. But I don't think they would. I know that mine wouldn't, at any rate."

There was a moment's silence, and then Peter spoke timidly.

"Do you know, Don," he said, "it's kind of darn wonderful to be in love."

"For God's sake, Peter," Don cried, "don't be a fool!"

Mrs. Kindred kissed her son good-bye more fondly than she had been accustomed to, but not quite as fondly as she had hoped to, distracted at the last moment by the thought of the ribbon king's daughter. His father shook hands with him genially, and gave him a timid pat on the cheek. Edith vaguely allowed herself to be kissed and hoped archly enough that Don would find time to write to her some day. The two went into the damp and acrid apartment hallway, down the iron-trellised elevator, along the low street, and into the gnomelike tunnel of the subway.

The high dome of the Grand Central was murmurous with unrest, with travel and adventure. Red-capped negro porters loitered in groups, or carried bags across the marble floor to the waiting gates of trains. There were preludings of Harvard, the silver ripple of a coon-skin coat, unmistakable undergraduates. Out of the streets of New York, the great station was spacious with distance of many cities. The two men went through the Boston gate, and into the close, warm, and yellow-lighted car.

Next morning the train burrowed into the station at Back Bay, and Don and Peter came out and sunned themselves.

To Peter there was too large a hint of happiness in this last return to Cambridge, and this first

return to Joan, to permit the usual haste in coming back to the house on Holyoke. He wanted to taste it, to go about it at leisure. Besides, he wanted to feel himself for a while in Boston, Joan's city, before he came to Cambridge again. So he and Don ate their breakfast in the sunny breakfast room of the Copely, among the perfumes of flowers and women, and the good brown odor of coffee, and Peter felt like singing.

While they had been gone, April rain had washed Cambridge, and April sun had warmed the trees. There were no more icy places, no more frozen spots of bare earth. The gaunt outlines had faded, the angles had rounded, had softened, had melted in the rain. The grass was faintly green; there was an odor of trees. It was like coming into the country. Only the shadows were still chill and unwarmed.

Peter wasted time, consciously. He was impatient to see Joan, and he put off seeing her as one puts off the pleasantly jellied portion of a cake at tea, for the last bite. He nibbled at his cake, doing a hundred odd things, unpacking, arranging his books, and his clothes, registering, attending classes. Then after lunch he telephoned to her, fearful that some anti-climax would occur to spoil things; but there was none; her fresh voice answered him, and asked him to dine with her that night in Boston at her home. She seemed uncommonly glad to hear him again, and his pulses beat away at a great rate. But at the thought of din-

ing with her in Boston before her mother and father, he felt oppressed. When he told Don about it, Don offered him advice.

“There is only one way to tell a man’s breeding and that is by watching him eat. Long generations of don’ts at table make the gentleman; it can’t be imitated or aped. Handle yourself, creature.”

That night he dressed himself with great care, and went into Boston with a beating heart. He could not help but think that Joan’s parents would see to the bottom of his manners at once, discover his love for their daughter, and . . . and—— He did not know what they would do then, but it would be terrible and mortifying.

However, they seemed to take his manners for granted, and were affable and kind. They employed no butler; he felt better for that, and after Joan’s mother had shaken him warmly by the hand, and Joan’s father had made a little joke about Harvard, he felt at home there, and happy. They were quiet people, thoughtful, with a hint of grim humor in their manner. Their family had lived for many generations in New England.

When Peter was unbuttoning his coat in the hall, before his name had been announced, Joan came flying down the stairs to him. He had never seen her in an evening gown; he had never imagined that she would be so lovely, and he wished that Don could see her. He wanted to hold out his arms to her as she came so swiftly and lightly,

and then to kiss very tenderly the slim hand she held out so gladly to him. But he was almost horrified at the thought of it. He could do no more than press her hand clumsily and hard, and feel what might have been the ghost of a lump in his throat at the sound of her greeting.

Dinner was more pleasant than he had dared hope; merrier; and well worded, too. There were several discussions, political and economic, in which Joan spoke, while her family listened to what she had to say, and answered her carefully. Peter contrasted these parents to his own, and understood Joan the better for it. Indeed, at first he grew embarrassed to find so much weight attached to what he himself said, and became confused, but he liked it all, very much. He could not keep his eyes from Joan, the sweep of hair about her temples, the delicate grace of her neck and shoulders, the movements of her hands, and when her eyes met his, he smiled, but once when she looked at him for a long moment he colored and turned away. The knowledge that he must be silent before the very real hurt of his love, made him miserable.

Supper came to an end, coffee was sipped, talk drifted idly, and they went upstairs. On a window seat half way up, Joan stopped and curled herself into a corner, deep in cushions, in shadow. The parents left them, and Peter stood before Joan and looked at her, fingering the leather chain of his watch. The stairs wound up beyond them,

and fell away below them in a sweeping curve; they were both silent.

"Sit down, Peter," Joan said, "and tell me about yourself."

There was too much to tell; he could say nothing; words crowded to his tongue, but they were all Joans. For a hot, adventurous instant the phrase I love you flamed through his mind and came perilously close to his lips, but he shut his teeth on it in horror again. It would be an unforgivable thing to say, and it would go answerless. He looked at Joan helplessly, and her eyes held his solemnly, until he sat down finally, and, drawing his ankle under him, swung the free leg up and down, idly, above the stairs. Joan sank deeper into the cushions, and her hands stirred about her throat and hair. Peter was seized with a feeling of weakness; he wanted to capture those hands and bury his face in them.

"Peter," Joan said, "why don't you say something?"

Peter gulped and took a breath. "There isn't much to say, Joan," he said. "I . . ." He got no further, but played nervously with his chain, and watched his leg swinging.

"Tell me about your vacation."

"Oh—it was very nice—Don was with me, you know. We went on a party with Helen . . . otherwise we didn't do much."

"I know. Helen wrote me all about it. She said that Don grumbled so."

Her voice, through the semi-darkness of the window seat, faltered ever so slightly, as though she, too, found it no easy matter to talk. She laughed a little."

"Did you miss . . . Cambridge, Peter?" she asked.

Again words rushed tumultuously to his mind. He chose them with a fast-beating heart and a sense of disaster.

"Yes, awfully . . . and I missed you, too." His voice trailed to a whispered laugh; he could hear his blood throbbing through his body. He sat erect.

"And you, Joan?"

"I have been working a little . . . and . . . thinking." He heard her voice tremble at the last word.

"Joan," he said abruptly, and then was still. No words would come. From the other end of the window seat there was a sharp-drawn breath, as though Joan were making a high resolve, that needed courage. Her voice reached him thinly, like a far-off flute.

"Peter," it said. "Tell me. Are you in love?"

The blood sprang back to Peter's heart, and held its motion for a long second. His mouth was dry; his body held in the grip of disaster, huge, gray, utterly still. There was no breath drawn in all the world, no sound save the heavy beat of quietness. He could not speak; his head nodded, dumbly. From her corner Joan sat erect, facing

him, snow pale, with wide, dark eyes, her clenched hand at her throat.

"With whom, Peter?" she whispered.

For a moment neither one moved. In Peter there was a stirring, a growing, a rushing, a miracle that welled up from unfathomable depths, that swept through the empty corridors of his body, that leaped at last to his mind, into his eyes and arms. A pouring of wild energy took possession of him and struggled with unbelief within him. It was incredible, it was untrue, it was stark madness. His body struggled with the flood, tugged, fought for its moorings; the flood swept over him and bore him before it. Joan's lips quivered and she put out a slender hand toward him; his arms went out to her.

CHAPTER VIII

PETER turned down Holyoke Street and ran at top speed. It seemed almost impossible to hold the tremendous bubble of news he had for Don, it kept growing bigger and bigger within him, and he must run faster and faster lest it escape him and he suddenly shout it to the narrow street before he had entered his own house. He burst through the door and leaped up the rickety stairs; Don was in his own room, bent over his desk, a lamp turned full and yellow on the book outstretched before him, a green shade low over his eyes. The room, save for that single lamp, was in shadow; Peter stood in the doorway, breathless from his running.

The bubble must have escaped after all, for at the sight of Don, Peter felt at once tired and impersonal, indeed, almost defiant. He came slowly into the room; he had no wish to blurt out anything, but he was important with his news, nevertheless.

"Hello," he said. Don stirred wearily, and

looked questioningly at Peter. But now that Peter might tell Don what he pleased, he wanted to postpone it, almost, in fact, to hide it for a secret as a miser might. He sank into a chair and stared at Don.

"Hm," he said. "How's everything?"

Don turned moodily to his desk again, and then Peter wanted to tell him at once. But he hardly knew how.

"Guess what," he said.

"What?" Don answered from his book.

Peter considered silently. Then, "It's happened," he said. Don swung swiftly around on him.

"What's happened?" he asked in amazement.

"Joan's in love with me."

Don looked at him without saying a word. Then he shook his head, and swung back to his desk, and looked at his book, but after a moment he rose and walked over to Peter and tousled Peter's hair.

"Well, old one," he said, and then, "Good stuff."

All in all, the entire world took Don's view of the matter, and Peter was the only excited person, with the possible exception of Helen, and she was told later. But certainly the streets were as greatly interested in April, the houses no less intent upon their own affairs, the sun no warmer, the wind no more fragrant. Yet perhaps the wind

was a little more fragrant. But the students who passed below his window, or who went by him in the Yard, talking and laughing, and the serious professors upon their platforms were no whit impressed, and saw no unusual radiance in Peter whereby they might know that he was beloved. And Peter was confounded above all by the quiet way in which Joan accepted their betrothal.

They met at lunch the next day. He had wakened in the early yellow and gray of dawn, and had lain there in his bed, his mind groping through the resurgent miracle of the night before, exultant to believe, yet awed and doubtful. Later he had dreamed above his breakfast, and had gone to his classes with eyes that were bewildered at accustomed sights, with ears that heard nothing of lectures, still living helplessly, it seemed, over and over again that unbelievable surrender. He wondered how Joan had met the day; he wanted to be with her, and, for some reason, to comfort her. It was with a strange terror and excitement in his body that he turned at noon to the Cock Horse, knowing that Joan would be there. But he had not expected the quiet happiness of her smile as she caught sight of him, or the shy, eager pressure of her hand. Watching her, he could scarce believe what had befallen him. They said little to each other across the table, but there was a new note for Peter in Joan's voice, a depth, a tenderness, a whisper of intimacy.

"Dear," she said to him, "I think I shall tell

Helen soon. And there is a great deal of thinking to be done."

There was, indeed, a deal of thinking to be done, and it was like Joan to consider that at once, and like Peter to overlook it. For one thing, there must be no more dallying with work; they must set their hearts together upon graduation in June. And for another thing, there were their various families. Peter had not thought of saying anything, but Joan insisted upon that.

"Peter," she said, "we're not playing, are we? Then if we're not, our folks ought to know and help."

But Peter was worried. "My folks won't help, Joan," he said. "And anyhow, let's wait . . . I want to be through here, and working . . . I want to be independent first. Then I won't feel so . . . humble about it."

Joan smiled and shook her head. "Peter, Peter," she murmured.

"You see," Peter went on, "it's different with you. Your people would listen and talk it over, and come to some decent opinion. But my father would be awfully angry at me without thinking a bit, and mother, too, because I have nothing at all to be married on, not even a job anywhere . . . and I wouldn't want your folks to help, Joan, honestly . . . it would make me feel rotten."

Joan played with her napkin and considered that. She looked up at last and reached her hand across the table to Peter. "Perhaps you're right,

Peter," she said. "We must be independent, of course, because if we weren't we'd have no place in society; we wouldn't be worth our keep."

"Not only that, Joan, but I want to meet your parents on an equal footing. I don't want to need their blessing."

It was decided that only Don and Helen should know until Peter, at least, was independent to some small extent. Peter wanted Joan's family to like him for himself, and not because Joan had chosen him, and he was very much afraid of feeling boyish before them and helpless and impetuous if he should ask for their judgment at that time.

At Brattle Square they met Don, and the three of them walked back again to the river, and sat on a weather-worn bench under a tree, with the sun high and warm above them, and the grass at their feet fresh and newly green. The river beyond rippled and shone under the sun; an eight-oared shell went by, oarlocks clacking, the bare shoulders of the men dipping and rising together to the coxswain's harsh monotone, their oars catching the sun, flashing yellow under the wide blue sky that rose shining and tranquil above the level fields and woods and far-off roofs toward Brighton. A wind blew in the faces of the three friends, redolent and cool, stirring the sun on their cheeks.

They sat there for a long while, happily, talking very little, save now and then of New York,

of Don who was to study there for the law, and of the city itself, the mighty test, the awaited opportunity. The descending sun slanted more fully in their eyes, as Don left them at last to ponder together what they would give to life. For they knew already what life would give to them.

The next day Joan told Helen.

April blossomed slowly into sure green, through cold days and warm, under northern skies, cloudless and spacious above low, distant horizons, warming Boston with the heat of the sun, tapping with rain on Peter's window panes, gathering the soft odor of fields and orchards and earthy roads to drift idly through Joan's open windows. The two rooms were empty, their owners tramping together about the countryside, talking an afternoon into evening on some tumbled, ivy-grown stone wall, adventuring together in Boston, dining sometimes with Joan's parents. Don and Helen, too, were often together, but to find the four of them at once was unusual, for Peter and Joan wanted to be alone; there were forever so many things to talk about, and such deep and sacred silences to keep.

"Mother likes you," Joan said to Peter, "and father, too, I think. But Peter, I'm afraid that they're a little bit suspicious. They are such dear people!"

"There's not much longer, Joan," Peter said. He had made up his mind to try journalism,

for he had no knowledge at all of business or of any profession or trade, for that matter. His ignorance had startled him at first, thrown him almost into a panic, until he had thought of the papers. He knew, at any rate, how a newspaper looked, and he knew that he could write as well as what he had seen written. The decision smoothed his way, apparently; Don agreed with him, and Helen had promised him an introduction. He was full of excitement, exuberant energy.

"Glory," he said, "if I'm taken, it will be fifteen a week, certainly not less than twelve. Helen said that a cub usually gets that much. Jinks, Joan, we could live on twenty."

His eyes dreamed of a tenement, and two brave people loving and working there. Joan was to study stenography over the summer; it would be a stepping-stone to all manner of great things for her.

His life moved serenely with April, with morning and evening, sun and rain. He remembered his other life faintly, dimly through a dream. The Peter of Exeter, of New York, of Harvard had lived once; this was another Peter who woke each morning to a world made up only of himself and Joan. Cambridge was a rhythm to hold his own days as they interwove with those of Joan, New York a vague and looming splendor ahead of him beyond the full flowering of May, college only an insistence of key and pitch. Hours slipped in-

sensibly into days, one indistinguishable from another, save when he might not be with Joan. For a while he lost track of time. A Peter Kindred went absently to classes, jotted down notes, scribbled letters to a family in New York, answered questions, bowed to acquaintances, but it was not he.

Joan, too, was tranced with the soft succession of days. If Peter were not with her, she could think of nothing but what she must tell him when they met again. Study was impossible, a thing of the past. When at times she grew conscience stricken, her anxious mind could not whip her body to its will. It was entirely too sweet a thing to take possession of the spring, all the full happiness of surrender to the drowsiness, stirred as it was with the brimmed joy of her heart.

But there were moments of impatience with the slow drift of days that followed one another so gently, the hours that brought them so very slowly to the starting point. For there was too much ahead for them to accept without a pang the un-availing and ineffectual happiness. It was happiness, but it was marking time.

"Peter," Joan cried more than once, "if it were only autumn now, and I were coming down to you . . . to our home, Peter."

And Peter would nod gravely, with sombre eyes, and pat Joan's hand. Yet before her, Peter felt himself half quixotic, half childish. There was in the level gray of her eyes, the sure logic of her

thought, the prim stress of her voice a power that held him silent and often rebuked his enthusiasm, and yet because of her slim body and the delicate lines of her face, he wanted to arm himself with knightly weapons and go staunchly ahead of her, clearing a path for her against all manner of ogres. However, there were no ogres, save those which waited for him in New York, and for all his impatience and his valorous eagerness to be at grips with them, he could not entirely down a qualm of nervous fear, the fear of untried arms and an untested courage. But the hint of such a thing to Joan shocked her.

"Why, Peter dear," she said, "how silly. There's work to be done, and we shall find it . . . work for both of us . . . hard, splendid work. I'm not afraid. I'll love it."

"Of course it's there," Peter said, "And we'll find it."

"Won't it be good to come home at evening, Peter?"

"And to find you there."

"No . . . , I'll be working, Peter. I'll be coming home, too."

"Yes. But I'll be coming home last, and whistle a very private, secret whistle to you, under your window."

"I'll whistle back, Peter."

"And then Don and Helen will come all of a sudden for supper."

"That will be expensive."

"Then the next night we can dine with mother and father."

"I don't know, dear. I don't know if we ought to, very often. It would be almost playing at being independent, wouldn't it? And we must really strike out, for ourselves, and make our own way. Or otherwise . . ."

They were both silent. Then Joan spoke again.

"I wonder if we'll come back to Cambridge again some day," she said softly.

"Of course we will. And some day my son . . ."

"And my daughter . . ."

Peter said nothing for a moment. Joan laid a soft hand over his.

"What were you going to say, Peter?"

"I hardly know. I was thinking of Harvard . . . and then I was thinking how . . . how I shall love your son, Joan."

She was quiet and then said gently, "I wanted to talk to you about that, Peter."

Peter caught her hand to his lips, but while he kissed it, he laughed. "Joan," he said awkwardly, holding her hand against his face, "tell me,—may I give a party when you're . . . when we're going to have a baby?"

Joan laughed, and her fingers trembled in his clasp. "Yes, Peter," she said, "if it's not too extravagant."

April gave way to May, and Peter and Joan

tried hard to study as they should. But little girls paraded through the streets in May parties, laundered and starched, resplendent with tinsel; the trees were in full leaf, the wind was a hint of lilacs. Voices and sounds up and down the streets softened and mellowed and droned, footsteps were slower and whispered more through the open windows. Men loitered longer and longer before the dormitories, and sat smoking and talking on the steps of lecture halls. Mandolins tinkled through the Yard at evening, from yellow lighted windows; twilight lasted until late, and night came mistily, with a damp fragrance. Barrel organs played up and down Mount Auburn Street; melodies stole insensibly through the wind, melodies and fragrances, orchards in bloom at last, far off in the west and north, folk stirring, restless folk in cities, no longer lonely, but seeking, wandering the streets upon adventure. Boston called insistently through the gradual evenings, across the river, called with lights and women's faces. There was a smell of tar on the roads, and the noises of trolleys were low and distant, murmurous and heavy. Oh, it was hard to work with a clear wind stirring the pages of a book, and the whole body crying to be with a beloved, a hatless, coatless, eager beloved.

"Peter," Joan said one day, after she had spent a night at home, "I've told mother. She wanted to know. She's very glad, dear, and she wants to see you."

"Joan! I'm scared to death! I feel like a child caught in a jam bottle!"

"You're a goose. They're awfully decent people, Peter. And I'm not a jam bottle."

"I know it, dear. But I'm not used to talking to parents . . . anybody's parents."

He had a long talk, however, with Joan's mother and her father. As he told her afterward, he gulped all the way in to Boston. But as he ran up the stairs her mother came to meet him, and giving him both her hands, looked at his face for a long time. He looked back at her, and they stood so until of a sudden, surprisingly, she bent forward and gave him a kiss.

"I loved her, then," he told Joan, "and I felt entirely differently toward them both. As though somehow they were trusting me not only with you, but with a part of all their own selves, their own hopes, and ambitions, and faith. It stiffened me up wonderfully. But we had a great talk, and I made a fearful ass of myself, of course, and said all sorts of remarkable things . . . and they didn't seem to mind, or think me an impudent baby at all . . . and we did have a good talk. Your father is a brick . . . I had no idea how much you mean to them, Joan. Well," and he took a deep breath, "I promised we'd hit it hard, and your mother is coming to Cambridge tomorrow to see you—and we're all to take tea in my room afterwards. Jinks, it's a jolly world!"

The old house on Holyoke street waited joyously for tea time. A copper kettle, unused for very nearly two years, stood boldly on a table, scoured and burnished for the occasion by Franklin, that kindest and very oldest of negroes. Before it ranged four nondescript cups; Peter had had one, Don had furnished two, and Franklin again, the fourth. No matter, they would hold tea from the brown tea pot with the broken handle, just as well. And to the side towered a small mountain of Cambridge's noblest and stickiest cakes, which had cost Peter all that was left of a bank account. With the tea table behind him, dark against the window and the failing light, and with Don beside him, Peter awaited his guests. It was not until they had come that Peter realized he had bought neither sugar nor cream for the tea.

Helen was excited at being finally in Peter's room, and peeked in at Don's room across the way, and giggled to find it in disorder, but Don had left it so quite on purpose, a purpose as stubborn and illogical as a small child's. Joan said little, but after she had looked around Peter's room, went quietly to his desk and sat there and looked out of the window across Mount Auburn street, as Peter must have done his three years at college, as he would still be sitting sometimes while in her own room she bent above her books.

That evening, at supper, even Don was restless, and had no heart for work. He and Peter sat

together in the Green Lantern, before their own familiar table, and he fingered the rough, blue patterned cloth absently.

"Peter," he said abruptly, "let's go in town to-night. We might try the Pops. Walk in and back. What do you say?"

"Great. I could no more sit home to-night . . ."

And presently the two were walking toward Boston, while a south wind blew steadily in their faces, a long way out of the sky.

"Think," Peter said, as they left the lights of Cambridgeport behind them and drew near the bridge, "How strange it will be to be leaving all this behind, all these years, the many little things, Don. To be coming up against the big things at last, suddenly. I've caught a glimpse of it to-night, a feeling of it, with the wind and the trees and the smell of lilacs and cottages . . . the old days slipping away, the days of drifting and romancing, and time to take a deep breath and go in. They've been good years, haven't they, and they've given me a big faith. Somehow tonight I feel as though I shall do well. At any rate, it won't be for lack of trying." He clenched his fists and lifted his head.

Don sighed. "Yes," he said, "You've been given faith, ancient. And you may come against big things. But . . . I'm afraid that it will be patience you'll need the most. We'll be together, at any rate. I . . . I wish you well, Peter."

He laid his hand awkwardly on Peter's shoul-

der, and a lump rose in Peter's throat. His voice trembled as he answered him.

"I know it, Don," he said.

To Peter, the future held vast enterprise. He looked to the south; across the arc of starry sky, beyond the darkness of the land lay the great city of his own, sounding with the deep toned hurrying of people, tumultuous with light, with high flung walls to house the roaring lives and enterprises of her folk. There, the thoughtful walks of Cambridge forsaken, the spacious evenings, the drowsy hours forgotten, alert at last, his days of apprenticeship, of squiredom, a memory for quiet hours, his vigil over, dubbed and arisen, he must test his right to a place among people, a membership in folk, he must build his home with what strength he had, build broadly and well, for Joan and for her children. It was the religion worth having.

And still the days lengthened and the twilight grew longer, the sweet smell of earth, of grass, of trees and of gardens heavier and more insistent, life warmer and drowsier in the sun, as college moved gradually to Commencement. The finals crept closer and closer, and for a week Joan and Peter turned stubbornly to their books. Then for the last time Peter sat in the curved seats of the lecture halls, and heard the ending of his courses, the farewells of the kindly, serene, relieved professors, with eyes that looked back curiously over his years. For the last time he

walked under the hot sun across the Square, to throw his note book upon his desk and sink into his dilapidated chair while through the open window floated the slow, familiar voices of his college.

He had not written to his parents of his betrothal. He wanted to tell them later, after he had found his work, and in that decision Joan's parents agreed with him. He would not think of them now; his examinations waited.

For two weeks then, he bent his memory upon facts, curious truths that he had long forgotten and would speedily forget. Joan he saw rarely; one afternoon they walked together as they had used to do, and one Sunday he dined with her in Boston. He noticed how tired she looked, how darkly shadowed her eyes were. She had been working very late for many nights.

"I'm going through with honors, Peter," she whispered to him.

Before his last examination he worked the whole night through. At midnight his mind fought with weariness; but at three o'clock he was wide awake. The house was utterly still; an unfathomable silence held all the land in breathlessness and hush. He alone, of all people, lived and moved and breathed. His thoughts were almost audible in the stillness, like a thin music; the leaves of his book turned with noisy rustlings; his room was peopled with the creatures of his fancy. The world slept, the world was dead. Across the silent

Yard, in other streets Joan lay asleep; he dreamed of her hair, curved delicately above the pillow. A cart rolled down Holyoke, the horse's hoofs making a friendly noise through the quietness. He drew back the curtain of his window; dawn was misty and gray outside, and in the east a band of faint yellow lay across the sky. Slowly he rose and stretched his arms wide apart; with quiet steps he went across the room and out into the hall. A great, darker silence enveloped him, as he made his way down the stairs that creaked as he went. He opened the door and stepped out into the morning. The greater stars were pale in the dawning, and a cold, damp wind blew gently against his face. The houses were deeper gray against the sky, with no windows awake; the arc lamp at the corner was faded in the growing light. The air was fresh, as though it had been washed in clear iced water, and he took a deep breath of it. Far off an early car swung grumbling dully around a curve.

Across the hushed Square he went, past the chill Yard, the looming dormitories silent among the trees, and on toward Radcliffe until at last he came before Bertram Hall. One window there was Joan's, where she lay sleeping. He stood a long while watching it, and his heart was like the clear telling of a prayer. He turned finally and went home; Don was at his desk already, as though he had always been there.

At noon Peter came out of the shadow of Sever

into the sun, crossed the Yard slowly, and went to his room and slept. College was over; he had done well.

The next day was his last in Cambridge; his trunk went early in the morning, and in the afternoon he went with Joan on a long walk through Waverly, to sit finally where they had often been, on a low stone wall with a wide slope of meadow before them, an orchard distantly, and a hill with red bushes beyond. Above them spread the kind sky of New England, and white pilgrim clouds sailed gravely by. They sat there, hand in hand, watching the clouds moving in the south, thinking their long, long thoughts together, with no need of words. Indeed, there was nothing that they might say, save that they were dear to one another, and their hands nervously entwined told them so better than their lips could. It was their last day together for a long while, and there was much to be accomplished before they met again.

"Now, that it's come," Peter said, "it's hard to go, Joan."

"It is very hard, Peter."

"I feel as though there were a thousand things that I must say, and yet there is nothing."

"I too, dear."

"Oh, Joan," he cried, of a sudden, "Do you love me?"

She smiled and bent toward him and kissed him. They said no more, and as the sun sank lower to

the tree tops they clambered from the wall and returned slowly, with linked arms to Cambridge. But Peter, turning, said good-bye to that field and that low wall.

Don had still another day to wait and then a summer in the west before he came to New York. The four friends sat at supper in the Green Lantern, and Peter said good-bye there to Mrs. Prentiss and to Susan. There would be many Peters after him, but they were no less sorry at his going, and with his dessert Susan gave him two pots of cream.

He said good-bye to Joan later. He was aghast at really leaving her; his mind murmured her name over and over again, soundlessly. For a moment she clung to him as though she would not suffer him to go.

"Good-bye," she whispered.

And that was all, and she had left him swiftly. In numb amazement he followed Don, and in the car as it clattered and shrilled toward Boston his mind was weaving thoughts of no importance, names and phrases, far out beyond his body. But he was glad that Don was beside him. The car sped over the open bridge, and with a start he saw the familiar curve of lamps on either bank, the distant arc of the bridge lights, the shivering pools of gold in the still, dark river below him, the blacker mass of Boston beyond, against a sky of stars. It was going very fast, all of it; there was little left him of all those years, save what he

might remember: an hour, or even less. He turned to Don almost in bewilderment.

"Why," he said, "it was only a day or so ago that I came down from Exeter! I seem only to have grasped at something, and then it was gone, something I saw and wanted . . . it is almost as though it had never been! Three years!"

Down the narrow, crooked streets they went together, into the smoky, gloomy station, and out along the platform beside the waiting train. There Don left him.

"Good-bye, old one," he said. "Keep a stiff upper lip and hit hard." He hesitated as though he would say more, but he seemed embarrassed, indeed, at what he would have said, and wrung Peter's hand clumsily, and turned and went swiftly back along the platform. Peter watched him go as though, in his going, Cambridge went, too.

Beyond the shed of the station the tracks spun out in myriad shining lines, crossed and recrossed each other; a bridge, black against the sky, soared vaguely over the yard; red lights twinkled near by, and farther and farther, until they were lost, red lights and green, low along the rails or high among signal towers, burning clear and abruptly through the night. The station was noisy with the escaping steam of engines, and with the muffled hurrying and the occasional voices of people. Beyond, along the rails, above the south, the night was calm, distant. Peter climbed

the high steps of his car, and crept into his berth.

Later he awoke and watched the darkness rush past his window, occasionally shot with sudden gold lights that came and were gone. The monotonous hum of the train soothed him, save when his body tossed as the car swung to a curve.

Far behind him in the night lay Boston and Cambridge, quiet and forsaken. The little wooden houses were asleep on Mount Auburn Street, and the Yard was dark, with those same stars above the dormitories that he could see from his window. They watched above Joan, too; he thought with a pang how much closer each gold light would be to her, as he passed it, than he would be in the morning. And Cambridge—Cambridge would sleep for a summer, and the ghosts of his footsteps and the echoes of Don's voice and his would drift in the deserted house on Holyoke with the warm odor of trees and grass. And then would come autumn and the wave of another generation would break over Harvard, driving echoes and ghosts before it.

He woke again in the wan morning light to see huddled gray tenements, draggled with hanging wash, flying past him. He dressed himself soberly, feeling cold and nervously excited. The train clicked over the Harlem River, sparkling in the early sunlight, and sped along between close tenements. He looked at them curiously, for now this city was his home, and these would be a part

of him. The train swooped into the black tunnel.

In the station people went by him hurriedly, intent, worried and thoughtful. He walked slowly, with his shoulders back and his chin held high, thinking of Don. He went down into the lighted crashing of the subway. A short man with a thin, twisted mouth stumbled against him, and snarled. A tall woman in black shoes with soiled white tops and draggled heels walked stiffly up and down the platform, chewing a bit of gum. The air was hot and lifeless in the subway; there was a stale smell of cigarettes and papers and dust. Peter's eyes widened. He had come home.

CHAPTER IX

THERE is a street in lower New York that answers to the nickname of Newspaper Row, where a group of the great city dailies have their unimpressive offices. At the foot of the street an elevated railroad bulks darkly against the structure of Brooklyn Bridge; the bridge is lost behind offices, and soars majestically for the river. Beneath, hurry a constant throng of people over cobblestones; horses and trucks, motors, trolleys, with a great hubbub, blowing of whistles, shouting of newspaper vendors and clanging of bells. Facing this is the small sweep of open park, the very determined court house, and beyond, the lofty, mountainous roofs of the lower skyline, with the chill stone tower of the Woolworth Building immeasurably high against the clear and pale sky, so high that it seems almost as if from its topmost windows one could see far across the ocean to London and Madrid, and all the south outspread under the sun, its hazy valleys, mountains and river courses.

To this street Peter came with his introduction from Helen, and presented it nervously to her cousin, a sub-editor of the *Sun*. The man shook hands with him cordially, and took him at once to his chief. In the newspaper offices, all seemed to be noise and confusion, coatless and perspiring men at typewriters, some kicking their heels, talking, smoking, rushing here and there with sheets of paper, tables piled high with all manner of things, papers, scribbled and torn, a noise of distant machinery. They waited deferentially for the chief to be ready to talk to them. He turned at last and looked blankly up at Peter. The sub-editor explained, and the chief's face grew weary.

"There'd be nothing for you to do," he said, "we're laying off men over the summer. Sorry."

The sub-editor led Peter back again, and shook hands with him. "Too bad," he murmured. "It's hard now, you know . . . you might try the *Tribune* up the street . . . next door . . . they're looking for young college men. Good luck. Drop in any time . . . glad to have met you."

Peter went out into the street with a hollow feeling in his body. It was unbelievable how suddenly this thing had happened. He had expected . . . he hardly knew what he had expected, but nothing so abrupt. He had had an introduction, and he had thought that even if he were not placed, he would be no poorer. But as he came into the street again, he realized suddenly that he had no introduction now, and that in exchange for it, he

had received nothing. He was vastly poorer. The curtness of the affair troubled him, as though it had been utterly impossible from the beginning, as though he had been impudent somehow in even thinking of such a thing. He stared thoughtfully across the park at the many-windowed buildings. People moved by him rapidly, and he watched them, troubled. They went along with swift strides, elbowing their way, their thoughts apparently intent upon some inward worry, jealous of time, of people, of all things that might hinder them.

Peter took grave counsel with himself. He had been thrown more suddenly upon his own resources than he had expected, and in a momentary flash of panic, he knew those resources to be weak, how weak he did not know, he had not experienced or considered. He recalled what the sub-editor had said to him about the *Tribune*, and he hesitated, but there seemed to be no avoiding it. He could not content himself with this one refusal and go home . . . to do what? He did not know that either, and yet the idea of walking unbidden into the *Tribune* office was repugnant to him; it seemed impudent and undignified. But there was no help for it, he must try, and again he felt a rush of panic at the thought that if he were refused he would be still poorer, and indecision at the thought following it, that if he went home he would still have the *Tribune* as a possibility, for other and more propitious days. But he frowned

at himself finally, and went into the *Tribune* building with a slow-beating heart.

He came to a rail, separating him from a telephone, an operator, and a tall office boy, who seemed to have recently outgrown the suit he wore. He asked to be announced to the managing editor with a voice that not all the determination of his will could make steady. The telephone girl and the office boy let the momentum of their talk run on a moment, and then the boy came amiably to the rail, and asked Peter his name.

"Mr. Peter Kindred," said Peter, and then added hastily, "he won't know me though."

The telephone girl looked at him coldly and impudently, and the office boy lounged at the rail pleasantly.

"What d'ye want to see him about?"

Peter's face burned and words died in him. It was impossible to tell this creature why he wanted to see the editor.

"What difference does it make?" he said at last faintly.

"What d'ye want to see him about?" the office boy asked again, less amiably, and the telephone girl smirked.

Peter was silent; it was a dreadful situation. Somehow, in the attitude of these two people he sensed mockery; before them he was being made to look ridiculous. He grew furious, but the more his cheeks burned, the more impossible it was for him to speak with assurance, the more impossible,

indeed, to think of what to say. When his own silence had become unendurable to him he repeated his request.

"I want to see the editor," he said.

"What about?"

Peter spoke as stubbornly and as brazenly as he could. "I want a job here."

But even as he said it, he knew that he had lost a job, even if there were one to be had. The telephone girl laughed outright, and the office boy, grinning widely, walked behind a partition and presently reappeared, so soon, in fact, that he could not have gone more than a dozen steps.

"He says he ain't got nothing for you," he said, smiling in high amusement. Peter tried to meet his eyes, tried to look stern, to look indifferent, but his eyes trembled. Confusion and mortification overwhelmed him, and without a word he turned and left the place.

Once outside, with the sunshine blinking in his eyes, he stood irresolute, feeling very small and shameful. It seemed to him that many people as they went by in the sun were laughing at him grimly, but it did not lessen the half furtive speed of their going and coming. Then he grew angry indeed at himself, and cursed himself in round and blasphemous numbers. But it all did no good; he was oppressed with a sense of the lost opportunity he had feebly let go by. The high office buildings stared down at him from the sky with blank, impersonal windows; there was nothing left

him to do, and sore and depressed he started home. Beyond the foot of the bridge he found himself on the Bowery, and thought he might walk the length of it.

The name roused him to curiosity, linked as it was with his childhood books and occasional criminal tales. He forgot his unhappiness for a time and walked briskly, peering down the streets he passed, standing before the small, dark shops, wondering to see so very many of them pawnshops, each with its identical dusty store of revolvers, flimsy violins and sorry jewelry. The street was gloomy with shadow; the elevated trains clattered and jarred above him, but the Bowery was lonely, there were few people. A large woman in an untidy black blouse came out of a doorway and gaped about her; she might have been a character from Dickens, but she seemed phlegmatic and sleepy and dull. A dark-browed man in a derby swaggered out of a saloon and went down a side street; Peter's eyes followed him. There, for instance, might go such a villain as he had often read about. Here was a swaggering creature in a derby who came out of a saloon and disappeared, and lo and behold, all the underworld came with him and laid tempestuous siege to Peter's mind. Down a street he went himself, looking up at the tenements; babies sprawled before him, old women gossiped in doorways, a warm smell of unclean places drummed on his nostrils. There were dirty children playing in the

gutters, on skates, spinning tops, fighting and shouting, running, as though all the world were just like this, a huddled squalor, a crowded, peopled place, as though there were no other world to envy or disdain.

Yet here Peter was made aware of a fierce pulse of life, a reality, a crude, raw energy that stirred and troubled him. It was like dipping below surface waters into the green rush of a deep tide; what monstrous passions moved there, what brutal forces, what untutored faith! For the first time he hesitated to formulate what he had seen in the usual comforting terms of academic economics. Finally, he became confused with many things, with the unnecessary gorgeousness of the wealthy, with the utter mawkishness of their pity and sympathy for the unfortunate, with the waiting land, fertile but hard, lonely, and exigent, with the intense and dull stupidity of the poor. They had no need of pity. If anything, they had need of a thoughtful hatred, to get behind them and push them somewhere. They had need of savage control.

"There ought to be an impersonal power, an all-powerful bureau, to size them up, individually, and give them work."

Such a bureau might just as well limit the number of their offspring. "The devil!" Peter said; "it would be better if the rich knew how to have more babies."

But at any rate, until some intolerant force took

them in hand and gave each one the right sort of work, and made it sure, the poor would be just as helpless and driven as ever; and every man's muscles ought to be worth enough money to feed a family of . . . a decent sized family, of course.

And there was the sensible power again, hating them because they were poor and dirty and foolish. It was much better than pussyfooting up and down and loving them a great deal, and leaving them there. Education . . .

The logic of it brought him back to himself again, and the disasters of the morning. He had not found work; that was bad enough, but not half the disappointment in himself, for out of an encounter with an office boy and a telephone girl, his confidence in himself had come well cowed. If only, he told himself again and again, he had had the impudence to tell the office boy he carried grave news of the Balkans, of the White House, of the editor's wife—anything; and yet he knew that he would never have the impudence for that. He saw before him a long line of office boys, and he would be forced to whip his spirit to meet them. Yet now he knew that no matter how bravely he considered what he would do and say, at the actual moment he would be no match for them, no match for anyone. It was a frightening thing to consider.

His parents accepted his failure philosophically enough, and he thought he detected a mildly triumphant gleam in his father's eye. His mother

gave him a smile and a pat of encouragement, but it was a matter of entire indifference to Edith; for her the world was a simple grouping of men with and without money, and the daughters of such men. That there should or should not be work was a question indeed far removed from any vital matter.

For a day he gave his attention anxiously to what he would do, but he came to no decision, and found no way out of his difficulties. The want section of a newspaper disclosed nothing; no other newspaper was advertising for cub reporters, no business men needed inexperienced men, save as office boys; there was a dearth, apparently, only of cooks and general houseworkers, and a great quantity of chauffeurs, governess-companions, and long-experienced men in every field, all filled to the brim with energy and ability, it seemed, and willing to work for almost no salary at all—that is, all except the governesses, who invariably stipulated a large salary and light labors. Peter grew close to bewilderment; he wondered if anyone wanted him at all.

In the afternoon, with a sinking heart, he went to another newspaper. It was useless to stand and argue there; he told his business to the office boy at once, and was at once declined. He had not expected anything else, and walked home again, his hands thrust deeply into his pockets.

That night at dinner he asked his father's advice. Mr. Kindred senior looked important at

that, and settled himself in his chair, with a clearing of the throat.

"Hmm," he said, "let me see. You want a newspaper job. Well, try the newspapers. I don't mind your being on a newspaper. Try them."

"I have tried them," Peter said. "I can't get in to the editor."

"Hmmm . . . well, it's hard . . . what did you expect . . . an unlicked cub out of college? I should think you'd go into some business, and get experience . . . go out on the road and learn to sell . . . it's what I've told you. Laces . . . silks . . . varnish . . . anything. Learn something about business. Knock some of the nonsense out of you. Get experience."

Peter pursed his lips. "Perhaps I shall," he said, "but I'd rather stay here in town, I think."

His father smiled amiably. "Well," he said, "that's right. Why didn't you ask me all this before? I might have sent you to a man I know on the *Times*; he'd have given you some good advice, if anybody could."

Peter's eyes lighted. "That's fine," he cried, "will you give me a note to him? I'll go down to-morrow. I didn't know you knew anybody on the *Times*."

His father considered for a moment. He had been hurt somewhat that Peter had not come to him at once for help, and yet there was in his mind the desire not to help Peter, not to make the way

easier for Peter than it had been for him, not to smooth off the edges against which Peter would bump. It would do the boy good to have trouble, he said; life had been made too simple for him entirely. It would do him good to see how far his fantastic ideas would carry him. For some reason he quite neglected to say also that it would do his own self good to see those ideas knocked out of Peter for a while.

"Well," he said finally, "I'll speak to one of the men at the office. He knows this newspaper fellow better than I do, and I'll see if he'll give you an introduction."

The next afternoon Peter went idly out of the apartment house and turned west toward Riverside Drive. It was a warm June day, and already there was an odor of summer in the air, the peculiar warm smell of city summer, of soft asphalt, of parks and bushes, of houses and cooking, of motors and washed streets. The river lay broad and deep blue below the Drive, dotted near shore with trim white boats. Across its great sweep rose the brown cliffs of the Palisades, low factories at their base, wharves and smoke stacks; green wild wood above, the red roof of a house, and over them the western sky, from where river and cliffs wound north beyond the towering walls of New York to be lost in the green distance, to where the buildings hid the water finally as it swept south to the bay. But water and sky were a different blue than New England rivers and

New England sky, less clear, and almost less blue.

Peter sat down on a bench under a tree, his back to the river, and looked soberly at the massive gray apartment houses that fronted the water, across the Drive. Motors moved by him smoothly, their tires whining over the shiny black road, leaving behind them a blue haze of smoke, and a faint smell of oil and gasoline and leather. Children played up and down the pavement, little girls in socks, with bobbed hair, neat little boys in sailor suits, on velocipedes or scooters, some jumping across the squares of hopscotch. Nurse maids wheeled perambulators up and down, and talked and gossiped; others sat on benches, baby carriages before them, and healthy, clean, washed and ironed babies in them, with rattles and dolls. Two women in light summer suits swung briskly along the street, their clothes ruffling in the small breeze, their high-heeled slippers twinkling below slim, graceful ankles. Peter looked at them gloomily; this part of the city was given over to careless folk, to children, to play. Here the dependents of successful men should come, untroubled and unhurried, to sit in the sun and watch the river and the slow boats up and down. He felt almost as though he had no right to be there, as though the sturdy buildings opposite him were regarding him questioningly, as though the busy men in downtown offices were wishing him away from their Drive, this Peter Kindred without a position, without even a family to be proud

of, proud enough to look tranquilly at those women, their graceful bodies and slim ankles and unworried laughter. This was their city, their river, their buildings; in it they were at home to love and build, to woo and suffer and enjoy, whereas Peter . . . what was he? A man of no importance, from Cambridge. The name came to him with a rush of feeling, memory, new courage. He stared truculently at the buses and the motors as they went by. Some day he, too, would live there, by the great suffering mackerel.

Afternoon slipped into evening; the blue grew old and faded, above the Palisades the sky turned to a yellow haze, and shadows began to lengthen along the Drive. The water of the river deepened, and dusk came from the east across the city. Motors droned northward in a gathering stream, their lighted lamps a flaring gold in the gradual amethyst of dusk, buses with windows alight, their decks crowded with people, rumbled and jarred through the traffic. Behind Peter the deep river grew deeper and was lost, save where tiny red and gold lanterns moved with the passage of unnoticed boats. The wind blew colder and moist, and in it drifted from the south bells and fog horns of ships, faintly and far off. Across the water the lights of Jersey grew slowly in uneven gold; above the dark looming of the coast the last faint colors of a sunset faded, and over them the larger stars already silver, pale in the clear green sky above the west. The city was still,

voices were shadows, and only Peter had no place there, no love, no chance to build. His heart sped with his thoughts to Boston, and with troubled eyes he thought of Joan, and with a dry throat longed for her voice at his side.

The next morning he took the note his father had given him to the *Times*. The man whom he had come to see was brisk and emphatic, slim, energetic, nervous. When he had read the note, he shook his head and smiled.

"Not a *chance*," he said. "I'll take you in to the chief if you wish, Mr. Kindred, but I can tell you beforehand what he'll say. We *lay off* men in the summer. There's no *news*."

He was discursive, and as Peter stood dumbly before him, he went on.

"What do you want to go into newspaper work for, anyhow? How do you know you'll like it? There's nothing *easy* about reporting, it's the hardest game of all. Are you dead set on it?"

"No," said Peter, "but I need a job somewhere—I can write decent English, and . . . I need money."

"Well, if you want to be a writer, there's nothing like the newspapers, no sir . . . it's a *wonderful* experience, a *wonderful* experience. Oh, absolutely. But I don't think you'll find any place here in town this summer. No, it would surprise me very *much* if you did."

"But a fellow must start in some time!" Peter said desperately.

"Yes, quite right, quite right. I had to start in, too, we all had to."

"How did you start?"

"Oh, I just started in, started in." He looked at Peter importantly for a moment. "Look here, young man," he said suddenly, "you're from college, aren't you? Well, then . . . about every other man who comes out of college wants to be a newspaper man here in New York. That's a *fact*. And every newspaper man all over the country has his eye on *right here*. We have about a dozen papers in the city. What are you going to *do*? We've got to take just the men who are absolutely *necessary*, men we can't do without. For that matter you've got to be necessary in *any* line to get along in this town. You've got to *be* somebody. They've got to be unable to *get along* without you. But once you make a place here, you're at the *top*, you're the *tenpin*, you're the *king*. It's a great little town, a wonderful city. Oh, absolutely."

"What could I do?" Peter asked gloomily.

"Let's see; you want big money; you want to write. Go into advertising. Advertising, that's it. The biggest *thing* in the country. I tell you, young fellow, you're wasting your time in the newspaper offices. I'd be *glad* to help you, if I *could* do anything, but there's nothing I *could* do. There are men in Denver and Los Angeles and Washington *now* that we need *right here* in this office, men who'd jump at the chance to come. But

we're full up, full up. Come in again some time."

Peter thanked him and left the building. Outside he came at once into the hurry and restless movement of the Rialto, the theater district, the roaring forties. The sun beat hot on the street and the low buildings; there was the sound of many people moving, and a great stench of automobiles. Men and women passed him, talking loudly, dressed in one extreme or another, with vacant faces, and tight waists, powdered noses, rouge, cigarettes, cigars, pimples. Peter looked at them angrily. Necessary, necessary . . . the word ran through his head. Were these people necessary to anyone at all? That he, then, should be unnecessary, filled him with intolerant anger. What sort of a city might it be? And yet these mummers were busy, were paid, were at home in the city where Peter was unnecessary. He vowed with a rebellious heart that he would not be unnecessary, but the thought of that brisk journalist worried him, gnawed at him. There, indeed, was a necessary man to the city, a man to reflect, to express the great middle tone of it, the pitch and key of it, that made it New York, nervous, braggart, metallic, inquisitive, impudent, enthusiastic. For all the thought bit at him, it was understandable; New York was so. But the Rialto . . . Peter was very sore and disgusted, indeed. At the Circle he stopped and watched a street sweeper, almost with affection. There was a man who did a man's work, who loved his God, his fam-

ily, and the morality of his people. He, too, had a place in the city, and Peter had not. And Peter found it in his mind half to envy the husky, stolid policeman who stood on a corner and looked so confidently about.

That night he wrote a long letter to Joan, to whom he had said nothing before concerning his failure and disappointment. However, he could keep it to himself no longer, although he did not tell her the entire trouble of his spirit.

"I have seen a different city," he wrote, "a city as remote to Boston, even to what I had conceived it to be, as Nineveh. Curious folk are successes, men whom you and I would very like have laughed at in Cambridge. They seem to have the knack of catching people on the fly; it is the only way to catch New Yorkers, and to do that you must have vivid bait. Men spring up all over with nothing to commend them save impudence, and they sell that to other men. A man changes the tire of his car; a crowd collects and gapes. And yet a moment before on that street you would have sworn that no man there but was on an important and hurried journey. And every man, even though he be the proprietor of a ramshackle shop with broken windowpanes, has the one and only something or other, the finest this or that, and knows more about all the world than all the world itself.

"I'm afraid that the newspapers are impossible, my dearest. As one man told me, I must be

somebody first, although I doubt that somewhat; I know of men who have gone to work as reporters, from college. But perhaps there was something else behind them. At any rate, I have been rebuked by editors and office boys. Oh, well, I shall find something soon. Don't worry. But I think that father will be angry at our engagement. Let him.

"Jinks, I am lonely for Cambridge! These dusty, baked streets, and these gloomy, high walls and the unfriendliness of people weigh down on me. They're not glad that another creature has come to help them work . . . work? To run a trolley, perhaps! I have a secret; it has to do with you. . . ."

When he had written his letter, he sat for a long while holding it before him, his eyes searching for Joan through remembered images that stirred wanly above his desk, blown to and fro in the slight night wind from his open window, his body reaching out to her, desirous, surging against the prison of its being. It was good to write to her, as though she were there, as though he were telling her all this. He brooded so, and through the window from below came drifting the slow, muffled voices of the city, the far-off rumbling of cars, the gradual coming and going of motors; a distant freight train moved with long reverberations, hollow bell tolling, and from the river sounded the faint, hoarse horns of ships; a block away a barrel organ was playing the *Miserere*.

The summer dragged through June and July, the city grew weary, asphalt melted in the sun and under its dusty gray covering it was soft, like viscous gum. By breakfast time the day was hot, the wind was hot, what little wind there was; sounds wilted. At evening men sat at the open windows of their apartments in shirt sleeves, fanning themselves slowly, children still sprawled and played in the streets, the stench of motors was insistent, diffuse, choking. There was no relief from the intolerable, humid heat; moving or still, people's bodies were bathed in cold, sticky sweat. There was no energy in the city for anything; men and women sat listlessly at night on the benches of the Drive, and looked at the river. Somewhere distantly there might be country and cool green, but in the streets the thought was unimaginable. The trees grew dry, the leaves pale and dusty; heat radiated from the pavements long after the sun had gone down in a red murk over the Palisades. Under the yellow glare of day the city was as though dead, the streets almost deserted. At night the city breathed again; families sat on doorsteps, there was subdued talk. folk moved about.

It was ebb tide in Peter's courage; he got through it as best he could, with grim and desperate patience. He read, wrote letters, walked about the city, sat whole afternoons away in picture theatres where at least during the droning course of a film he forgot the heat, forgot his

body, his clinging, moist clothes. He had no heart to plan anything; he went without hope to three more newspapers, and found no encouragement; he wrote to one more, and was unanswered. He answered many advertisements, some personally, some by letter, but they all came to nothing. Men wanted office boys, or young clerks to tie up bundles, to take stock or to run errands at a few dollars a week; other offices wanted only experienced salesmen.

Into Peter's mind was creeping a full and bitter knowledge of what competition might mean, of the unending struggle among men to live, of the entire loneliness of men among men. It seemed to him that here was no companionship of labor, no humanity, no common bond of men together facing the darkness, glad, as they should be, for even the slightest addition to their strength, but that rather here was a cold-eyed jealousy, scorn of other lives, greediness and suspicion. It seemed as though he were denied the right to live and to work and to love and to build, as though men would be happier if he were dead, and they in peace to what gluttony they pleased. It was damnably uncarverian, all of it.

His father, too, grew impatient at last, and sent him to several of his business acquaintances, but they could offer Peter nothing save a hope of something in the fall.

Early in August his spirit failed him entirely, and for the first time he wrote a shameful letter

to Joan, a petulant, long letter, almost the wail of a child. It was nearly a week before he heard from her again, and then she wrote a splendid answer, of faith and encouragement.

"Something will turn up, dear Peter," she wrote, "and if we must wait until fall, why, then, I suppose we must. You must not lose heart . . . it is not like you to do that. Other men have found work, and have waited even longer. It is no criticism of you, dear, that you have been unfortunate so far. It is miserable that you should be in the city this hot summer. But—courage! I shall be with you soon, I know."

Two days later Peter wrote again.

"Yoicks!" his letter ran, "it has come! I have found it. I am a worker, a business man, a creature upon a salary, a necessary person! And Joan, you'll not guess my salary. Not wages, mind you—salary! Fifteen dollars a week!

"And here's the whole thing. Your very dear letter crept into me and bellied me out with hope. I bought all the newspapers, and took them up to my room, and went over every single male wanted column—and I found it: the Porter-Baffle Company wanted a copy writer . . . they're a big advertising agency, you know . . . and down I went. They have a lot of offices way up on the fifteenth floor of one of the Fourth Avenue buildings, at Twenty-Seventh Street. In I went with knees trembling and all the scorn I could get on my face, and asked about it. There weren't many answers,

I think, because they took me. A long, thin creature looked me all over and asked me about my experience and I lied like a devil and told him how I'd always been interested in advertising, ever since I was born, and how my best friend at Harvard was the son of an agent in the West . . . imagine! But I nearly choked as I said it. And then he asked me to write a lot of things and make some sketches of what he called layouts—I played around with the ideas and juggled them, and he seemed satisfied, and I got the job. I got it! I got it! Imagine—you dearest old Joan!"

She telegraphed to him at once; he found the telegram on his desk at home, after his first day in the new office. It was a happy homecoming; his mother and father smiled at him across the dinner table, and Edith asked him innumerable questions, even a little impressed with the dignified sound of his position—copy writer with the Porter-Baffle Company, advertising. His family seemed content with him; he read in their faces naïve satisfaction and pride. He knew that his father would be talking to the men of his acquaintance about his son, just down from Harvard, and gone into advertising, doing very well, remarkably. The thought warmed him, tickled him, indeed. He answered Edith's questions with a feeling of fondness for her.

After dinner, with Joan's telegram in his pocket, he went slowly down Riverside, and sat again upon a shadowed bench with the Drive be-

fore him. Moonlight was pale on the river, the sky was clear and dim above the Palisades, and the high, broad walls of the houses loomed gray through the moonlight, a wash of gray, deeply shadowed, broken with the gold of windows. People talked nearby, moved up and down before him, arm in arm, laughing and murmuring. It was his city at last, and he knew how beautiful it was. For a time, profound loyalty possessed him.

He was given a large flat desk in a small, partitioned room, well crowded with similar desks and men at them, young men, for the most part, very busy and worried young men, and old desks. An immense spread of window rose abruptly before him, and through it he could see northward across the city, above the lower roof tops, and past occasional high buildings. In his room other men wrote copy and specialized on layouts; a man bought paper and printing and cuts, and still another attended to the buying of space in magazines and newspapers, as it was needed. In the room beyond the partition, a commercial artist did sketches, posters, bold color work, and another, fine pen work. In the large space outside, typewriters clicked incessantly, office boys moved among the files, clerks kept their books. Across its length were the private offices of the solicitors.

"But," Peter said to the man who sat nearest to him, "I always imagined that a solicitor was a

sort of unpleasant fellow, just about at the bottom of everything."

"Hell," said the man, "not in this game. Though there's all kinds of solicitors. But these solicitors are really a sort of partner. Different, you know."

After a while, Peter learned the hierarchy of solicitation. First, and lowest, are the men who solicit for the newspapers. They move among the agencies, urging the respective merits of their newspapers upon unwilling ears. It is an agent's duty to remain both friendly to them, and unbothered by them, a difficult and tactful task. Next, the magazine solicitors, of varying importance, according to their magazines, some, who represent the "Saturday Evening Post," almost of regal importance. And, finally, the agency solicitors.

"You see," Peter's desk mate explained to him, "our men—the agency men—really have to create the business. That is, they go to Mr. Whozis, who makes glue, say, and they get him to advertise his glue. They get him to spend fifty thousand dollars, say. That's not much."

"Whew!" said Peter. "How do they do it?"

"Oh—they study his line—learn his problems—and show him how this or that sort of advertising would help him. Or, now, they go to Whatshisname, who is advertising already, and show him how he can do better. Then they call in the maga-

zine and newspaper solicitors, or they listen to their arguments, and give them so and so many pages of advertising. And then we write up the ads."

"Jinks," said Peter, "I should think that they'd have to be awfully clever and know a lot for that!"

"Well, they do. They're the slickest men in the business. And, of course, they have to know something."

"But do they really know more about a man's business than he does himself?"

The acquaintance winked. "Well," he said, "what's the difference if they land the account, hey?"

In the heat of midsummer the office moved with a dash and a clatter. Every one seemed to be busy all the time; it was as though great movements were afoot, as though important business matters centered there from all over the country. The office, so high, was cooler than the street; men moved there alertly, urgently, swiftly. On Peter's desk lay future booklets, pamphlets, advertisements, full pages in obscure magazines, letters that would be copied in many thousands. He labored over them joyously, filled with a sense of the value of his part in big matters, in large expenditures. Only, sometimes he wondered at the impudence of statements he was told to elaborate.

"Look here," he said on one occasion to the

man who sat next to him. "Here's this automobile folder, and I'm going to feature 'the most beautiful car in the world.' But, Lord knows, it isn't that!"

"What's it to you?" the man said. "The public wants to hear it. If you didn't say it was the finest thing in its class, they'd think there was something wrong with it. Go ahead—don't worry—they'll swallow it, alright, alright!"

And again, there were times when Peter's copy came back rigorously censored. "For God's sake," one man scrawled across the page, "you're not selling tea to ladies in Boston, you're selling chewing tobacco to farmers in Wisconsin. Talk to them!"

But it was not long before Peter learned what was meant by a selling talk, and for a while he took pleasure in snappiness and what he thought might be salesmanship. He added the words selling point and slogan to his vocabulary.

At the end of August he was tired and a bit pale and thin. He was unused to sitting at a desk all day, indoors, hard at work, and the heat sapped his strength, that and the smother of the subway. But he was eager and fairly content, a little rushed along, perhaps, and bewildered with the swift swing of working days and new impressions. However, when he learned that he was satisfactory on the whole, and that he might continue at his desk indefinitely, he was jubilant, and planned to tell his family about Joan at once.

He came more proudly home that night among the close-packed and weary rabble, conscious of playing a not unworthy part, feeling himself somewhat a solitary and romantic figure among a drab multitude. He found his father in shirt sleeves sitting solemnly before an open window in a gloomy room, tired and hot, drawn with the accumulated weariness of the summer, silent, jealous of rest and quiet and comfort. His mother was in another room; he was glad of that, for he wanted to speak to his father manfully, alone. But it was a difficult thing to tell.

"I'm to stay on at the office," he said, and his father nodded slowly, as though he had not expected anything else. Peter hesitated.

"I thought I ought to tell you, sir," he said, "I . . . I want to be married."

His father did not move or speak. Peter cleared his throat. "I've been engaged . . . engaged for some time."

"What foolishness is this?" his father asked, ominously quiet.

Peter frowned. "I've been engaged . . . for some time," he said again. After a silence he told his father about Joan. Mr. Kindred brought his hand down on the arm of his chair.

"Well, then," he said, "you'd better forget all about it," and then, explosively, "you'll get no help from me." He was very angry.

"I didn't expect to," Peter said coldly.

"No? And how did you think you'd live?"

Peter told him. "We both intend to work," he said.

His father said nothing for a long while. Then he threw himself back in his chair.

"I might have expected something like this," he muttered. At that moment his wife entered the room.

"Here," he cried to her, "here. Listen to this. The boy . . . Tell your mother, Peter."

"Peter . . . what is it?" his mother cried in alarm.

"Nothing, mother," Peter said humbly, "nothing, except that I'm engaged and I'm going to be married."

"Peter!" His mother went up to him hurriedly and shook him. "What do you mean?"

"I've been engaged since April," Peter said coldly. He disliked the scene intensely; he wanted to get away from it. His father threw himself back in his chair again, but his mother's face lighted with a rush of pleasure.

"To that Boston girl? Why, Peter!" She looked at him, and then kissed him sentimentally. He disliked that, too.

"Bah," his father cried. "Well . . ."

"You bad boy, to have fooled me all this time. But I knew it," his mother said slyly.

"Not a red penny," his father muttered.

His mother sat down and looked up at him affectionately. She wanted to know all about it.

"But you're so young," she cried, "how do you know?" To her it was entirely a matter of romance.

"She's of very good family, isn't she?" she said. "You two children . . . are her folks so rich? . . . dear me."

Peter was on edge with impatience and nervousness. He wanted to cry out. His father said nothing, but stared gloomily before him. His mother asked him a hundred questions, repeating herself over and over again. She was amazed and excited at the thought of a wedding; her friends kept popping into her mind; she thought how surprised they would be, she wanted them to be envious. She wondered what Joan's parents were like, and if they would care for her. Her whole life swelled with curiosity, with new opportunities, with legitimate and sentimental excitement. But Peter's father sat stubbornly mute, nursing his anger at what was vaguely in his mind as his son's ingratitude.

Dinner was eaten in silence and constraint. Peter knew that his mother had told Edith, for she looked at him in a new and somewhat startled manner, as though, for the first time, it occurred to her that Peter was a male, with all the due emotions of a male, and the proper sexual desires. There was unspoken curiosity, too, in her gaze, for what Joan might be; as for his mother, she made no attempt to conceal it. How, or on what Peter would live, never entered her head; her

mind was set upon engagements, weddings, gossip and receptions.

"The prettiest wedding I ever saw," she said, "was at night, in the girl's home. The place was full of white flowers, and an orchestra played behind palms."

"That must have been great fun!" Peter muttered.

"It was lovely. I cried," his mother said.

"Oh, that's all nonsense," Peter exploded. "A lot of silly twaddle and fuss about a perfectly simple thing. You can make just as fine a home and have just as many babies from a justice of the peace!"

And then his father lost his temper. "Confound it!" he cried. "Peter, be still! I've heard about all the foolishness from you, young man, that I can stand!"

But the next night his father called him in to his own room, and carefully shut the door.

"Now, then, Peter," he said, but with half a tone of gentleness in his voice, "what is all this about marrying and being engaged and this . . . Joan?"

"Why, there's not much," Peter said, a bit wearily. "I told you all there was to tell last night. . . ."

"Yes, I know. Who is she?" . . . Peter told him.

"What do her parents say?"

"They think it's splendid," Peter said, with an emphasis that he could not control. His father stroked his chin.

"Of course you understand that this is a great shock to your mother and myself, Peter," he said.

Peter sighed. "Yes, sir," he said dutifully.

"I cannot afford to support you, Peter," his father went on solemnly, "and I would not if I could. I don't believe in this helter skelter marriage business."

"We haven't expected anyone to help us." Peter said.

"Certainly you're not fool enough to think that you can live on what you're making?" .

"No. But Joan will work, too. Between us we will make enough. We have the same ideas about that . . . and other things. That's why we're marrying."

"Do you mean that this young lady has gone crazy over babies, too?"

"It's not crazy, sir," Peter said hotly. "We believe that a man and a woman are here on earth only to marry and work and breed children, and that's the only way people can be happy and do any good and be of use to the country and themselves. There's nothing crazy about that, is there?"

"And what if you have a baby on your few dollars a week?"

"We sha'n't have any until we're ready," Peter said coldly.

His father grunted. "Children will happen, you know . . . can't be helped."

"Not the way we expect to live, sir," Peter said.

"Humph. And how do you expect to live, may I ask?"

"Decently," Peter said angrily, "until we're ready to have children. We're not marrying to . . . to . . ."

"Oh," said his father. He was silent for a moment. "You are going to live . . . as though you weren't married until you can have children."

As Peter did not answer, he went on after a bit. "You expect to be able to live like a . . . to live that way as long as you please?"

"Certainly," Peter said.

His father sighed. "All fools aren't dead yet," he said grimly.

Peter was furious. "It is a matter," he said icily, "that concerns only me and Joan."

"Well . . . we won't discuss it. Now understand me! I sha'n't forbid you to marry. But you may expect no help from me. And I'll not go to any expense toward the wedding. That is their affair."

"There'll be no wedding, sir."

"What?"

"Our marriage is a matter of importance only to the state. We'll make a contract to care for our children, and obey the marriage laws. That's all."

His father gasped. "You have the impudence to say this to my face?" he cried. Then he grew quiet and repressed. "And does the young lady agree to all this folderol, too?"

"We've gone over it quite thoroughly. There's no reason why marriage should be made a vaudeville act."

Mr. Kindred grew grim and his eyes sparkled, but he controlled his voice.

"I sha'n't talk to you any more, Peter," he said. "If you want to make a laughing stock of yourself, go ahead. If you want to break your mother's heart, go ahead. I don't care; I'm through; I wash my hands of you. It's what I might have expected, with these damned new-fangled ideas in the colleges. Go on—go on—get out. I'm through."

His mother, however, first refused to believe that Peter could have any such terrible ideas about weddings, and then became excited and wept.

"Peter, how can you do such a thing?" she cried passionately. "It isn't right, dear, it isn't right; it's sacrilege. They can't be nice people to allow it, I'm sure they're not nice people. Why, Peter—think, Peter, it will hang over your head all your life, you'll be miserable, you won't be really married, it'll be wrath and shame. . . . Oh, this is terrible, terrible!"

She carried on at a great rate, but there was no help for it; Peter would not even discuss the matter. So she grew subdued after a while, and

went about looking consciously hurt and tearful.

Thereafter dinner was eaten in silence and embarrassment, more marked for the jovial intrusion of one Eddie, a friend and admirer of Edith. He was a large man, with soft features and watery blue eyes; his hair was swept back from his head in a greased pompadour. He smiled continually and ate swiftly and noisily, with scant courtesy; he talked in a cocksure, impudent voice, with a slight nasal twang.

"I guess that dance the other night was some dance," he said to Edith. He turned to her mother. "You oughta seen Edie, Mrs. Kindred; she was the queen of the ball, all right."

And so he prattled on about dances and theatres and people, giving his opinions on everything. He turned finally to Peter.

"Well," he said, "how goes the advertising? It's a great little game, I tell you. I know; I'm an advertising man myself."

As a matter of fact, he worked in a printing shop and called on minor druggists and moving picture theater proprietors who might want small pamphlets prepared for them. He had a large acquaintance among soda clerks.

Peter said nothing to Joan about the manner in which his family had accepted his announcement, other than to tell her generally that they had been very much upset, but that they had taken the matter well enough finally; he thought that

they would be more pleasant about it as they grew more used to it, and saw no gain in worrying Joan and her parents unnecessarily. So Joan prepared to come to New York within a fortnight, and wrote jubilantly of things in her own calm life.

But Don came to New York first, from the west, sunburned and energetic. His telephone message caught Peter half-way through his breakfast, and Peter shouted with excitement to hear his voice. They met at noon, in the wide, low lobby of the Prince George, and exchanged a mighty handclasp, their eyes laughing deeply, contentedly at each other, out of their grave faces.

"Oh, Jingo!" Peter said gruffly, "it's good to see you again, you old crocodile!"

Later, in a corner of the dining room, they looked at each other curiously and smiled half-eagerly, half-shyly, as men smile at one another after long absences.

"Peter," Don asked earnestly, "how are you hitting things?"

"Well enough, Don."

"Great. . . . Tell me—how do you feel about things . . . the work?"

"It's good stuff. But you get an awfully funny idea of economics. Everybody in the world seems to be a salesman. There doesn't seem to be anything anywhere except salesmen. And they're all advertising experts."

CHAPTER X

PETER came into the office with such a helpless and self-conscious smile quavering about his mouth that the space buyer asked him jovially if he were to be married that day. Although there was nothing remarkably merry in the question, Peter burst out laughing at it, and sat at his desk with a deeper and a more visible smile, one he could not get rid of. The next morning Joan was coming.

And this, therefore, was her last day in Boston. He could not keep his eyes away from the broad window facing the north; beyond that low horizon haze of very distant roofs, and on beyond a bit, Joan was preparing for her trip, packing, bidding folk and places good-bye, thinking of Peter, and looking probably to the south, toward that window. Or perhaps she was shopping, walking down Boylston, past the Common, past Arlington Street where the cars climb up from the tunnel to Boylston Street, and stop at the edge of the park, opposite the trees and the warm green grass and

the lake with the swans on it. That would be walking south, and so she would be looking toward his window too. Although his mind was eager and sharpened for work, all morning long he watched the clouds pile up in the north, above the end of the city, and disappear.

The day passed in a sort of happy bewilderment, untroubled and patient waiting. The city seemed to Peter to be expecting her also; everything would be entirely different when she had come, made whole and intelligible. Only his parents threw a shadow on the day, but he put them resolutely from his mind; he hoped for some vague change in them as well.

After dinner that night he was restless, and since he could not be with Don he wandered idly about the streets, grateful for the cooler wind, the darkness, the coming and going of people, faces moving past him, the lighted shops and the street lights, the impetuous, half-phantomlike city at night. With only a handful of hours between himself and Joan he became nervous and impatient, and could hardly get himself home to bed, as though, somehow, the time would pass the quicker if he were awake watching it.

In the morning before breakfast he swept under the still city in the deserted subway, and coming swiftly up the stairs into the mighty and reverberant terminal, stood almost alone beneath the lofty curved roof, breathless and elate before the closed gates where Joan's train would come, some twenty

minutes before her train was due. He stood expectant for five minutes, and then there was still a quarter-hour left him; he paced up and down slowly across the broad and sibilant floor, looking curiously at the few figures in the station: a pretty mistress with earrings, thoughtful and worried, a haunted Jew with curly hair waiting for his wife, perhaps, an old nurse and two slim, eager children. A guard in gray arranged a line of rope before one gate; Peter heard a loud voice crying that on that track the Boston train would be coming. He took his place so that he could see the empty track below, and the shadowed platform. Red-capped negro porters went through the gate talking in low voices and down the track and along the platform. A yellow flaming light grew through the gloom of the yards and swung on toward them, the low dun train creeping across clicking switches, nosing its way slowly in along the platform. It came to a stop, the platform became dotted and then filled with people, hurrying up the incline to the gate; a few men went by swiftly; one stopped and caught the mistress with the earrings in a great hug, and they turned and went out together, laughing and talking. People crowded the gateway, surged through and passed, and then there was Joan. But even as she dropped her bag and turned toward him, shyness overcame them both, and after the smallest and most impersonal of kisses, they walked silently, with burning cheeks, across the station.

Peter's heart had stopped in his body from utter, embarrassed and inarticulate happiness; he looked at Joan, smiling eagerly, and she, meeting his eyes, put her slim hands to her cheeks to hide the red glowing there. With a low laugh he took her arm and pressed her closer to him as they walked. He became articulate.

"Jinks," he said.

But once in the subway they both lost all shyness, and each brimmed over with things that needed to be said at once, but in the shriek and clatter they must needs go unsaid, for all their necessity. So Peter and Joan did little more than smile at one another, and look and look.

The family waited for their arrival in such effective regalia as they could commandeer for the occasion, taffeta and ruffles, starch and Mr. Kindred's very best business suit. Whatever of fear Peter may have had was speedily put at rest. As they came through the door his mother sailed majestically into the hall and bore down on them, beaming.

"Mother," Peter said, "this is Joan."

Mrs. Kindred bustled forward as though she expected to be kissed, but Joan shook hands with her gravely. They went back to the parlor, where his father and Edith were standing awkwardly, hardly knowing whether to come forward or to stay where they were, to be sitting or standing. Joan went directly to Mr. Kindred and shook hands with him.

"How do you do?" she said. He hustled a little, too, and smiled and nodded, but could think of nothing to say, so cleared his throat and pulled at his collar. In turn, Edith greeted Joan half-shyly and clumsily, offering her a limp hand; she would have understood it better if Joan had not been so grave and gracious and unembarrassed.

"Now, then," said Peter's mother to Joan, "come right with me, and I'll show you where to put your things, and you can make yourself right at home." She went out, and took Joan with her, leaving Peter and his father and sister standing together like so many sheep. Peter and his father stared at each other, and then the older man cleared his throat again and put his hands behind his back and rocked up and down on his toes. Edith played nervously with a book, and kept her eyes down. When Peter's eyes and his father's had grown as round as two saucepans from staring at each other, Mrs. Kindred brought Joan back, and the five of them went in to breakfast.

He had never been so purely exuberant as he was that day at the office, with Joan in New York at last. It made a difference, remarkably. . . . There had never been anything like it. The city glittered for him like wine in the sun; her presence was manifest in every lout who hurried up and down the streets. She was there, she was in hailing distance, she would be there at evening, in his own home; the day spent away from her was

exquisite with the sure thought of her at its close. He had no appetite at noon; he wanted to telephone to her, but it was more pleasant to deny himself that. At night he came home unaware of the slow, struggling crowds, unaware of anything save the lordliness of his life, washed clean in happiness.

His mother met him at the door and gave him an extra fond kiss and a hug. Edith came out of her room and whispered to him.

"She's perfectly sweet," said Edith.

But Joan laughed when she saw Peter, and gave him her hand, which he held a while, immeasurably happy. And after dinner Joan put on a little blue hat, and she and Peter went out together, to walk up and down Riverside, arm in arm, and all the music in the world stole with the night into Peter's body and swept through him, and the Drive, the lamps, the wind and the dark turned into music, too, and stirred him and troubled him with the very fierceness and insistence of his content.

"Peter," Joan said at length, "I told your mother that we'd not be married by contract. After all, dear, it doesn't matter, and she was very, very much upset at the thought of it. So we shall go simply before a Justice of the Peace."

"But mother wants a regular, terrible wedding, Joan."

"I know, but that's impossible. I'll not be

gaped at when I'm married. So it's settled, dear."

But somehow Peter disliked the thought of a Justice of the Peace. It was a small dislike, and he frowned it down at once.

However, it would do; apparently it saved his mother from succumbing beneath the black shame of a contract marriage, and as Joan said, the principle was too unimportant a one to fight about; it would be enough to be married quietly, before their parents. From this, the Kindreds managed to derive some satisfaction, and Mrs. Kindred almost grew to believe that there might be something pleasantly exclusive about a wedding to which none of her friends, however intimate, could be invited.

The days went by swiftly, and much was done and little spoken. Peter's father had taken a solid liking to Joan, and Edith was fairly well thrilled at the imminence of a wedding. As for Peter's mother, she grew visibly in pleasure, pleasure at the admiration of her friends for Joan, pleasure at the shopping to be done, the china, the linen, the modest furniture, and the tiny flat itself, perched on the fourth floor of a model tenement by the East River. It was in the very heart of the slums; that had bothered her fearfully at first, but Mr. Kindred had stood up manfully against her; Peter could afford no more certainly; it was clean and cheerful; the slums be . . . be . . . who was Peter to be too good for the slums?

And when she saw the well-built tenement, and the tiny flat itself, the three little rooms, shining with sun and cleanliness, she became reconciled and grew cheerful and hopeful and told her friends defiantly that she'd like nothing better than to live there herself.

But as for Peter, he lived in a daze of contentment, and loved everything, from Edith to the tiniest cup with blue flowers painted on it and the remarkable yellow vase an aunt gave as a wedding present.

One Sunday they spent in the little flat, unpacking china and silver—the little they had—and linen. They cooked their lunch on the great stove in the main room; Joan cooked, wonderfully well, Peter thought, but he could hardly eat for watching her. She came up behind him softly, and laid her hand along his cheek.

"Oh, Peter," she cried, "won't it be fun!" He caught her hand and kissed it. The voices of innumerable children mingled with the noises of the street; the windows, broad, from ceiling to floor, were yellow with the sun of early afternoon.

At evening they walked home together, through crowded streets, past dark-doored and unpleasant tenements, under the shrill elevated roads of Second and Third Avenues, through the streets grown suddenly quiet now and dignified, past brown-stone houses, down the white grandeur of Fifth Avenue in the dusk, and across the wide twilight of the Park. To the south, Fifty-ninth Street

towered against the night, a dim and lofty crest of roof-tops and lights half way to heaven; and there too glittered the thousand windows of the Plaza like a great jewel in the dusk against the evening sky. Courage swelled through Peter like a gale; it was his city, the beautiful, the mighty, his to know, to love and to conquer, from the slums behind him in the east to those lights upon the south. And again he was oppressed with a sense of many folk, and the longing to be known and to be great among them.

Through all the excitement preparatory to the wedding Joan moved untroubled and precise, capable and delightful. After one day, Mrs. Kindred surrendered to her entirely, and even took a pleasure in that, and boasted of it. Together they shopped and unpacked bundles in the little tenement and sewed and cleaned and arranged and put things away. Peter, in his office, fell to his work with a heart as light as foam; at night the dinner table was merry with unusual talk and Mr. Kindred, smiling and important, carved the roasts and kept the best bits for Joan. And as Joan had the consummate tact upon one occasion to find something about the sleek Eddie to admire, Edith was not jealous of her; at least, not very much. But Peter would forget to eat for looking at her, he was so happy. After dinner Peter and Joan would go out; once to a picture theater, but Joan did not care for that, she preferred to be out walking, talking and keeping silence, or sit-

ting by the Drive, watching the river. Sometimes Don called for them, or they met him and the three of them walked together, Joan between the two men, an arm for each. The Drive fascinated her, the smooth, shadowy road, the quiet, gleaming river below, the distant sounds of freight trains and ships, the trees, the motors, but most of all the looming apartments facing the west. It was almost like old days to be together; Helen was lacking, but she would come later.

Then Joan's parents came down from Boston, and the curious confusion of meeting took place all over again. But Joan's mother and father were kindly people, and expected little; the Kindreds were ready to receive them with a touch of reverence, although Peter's father held the very, very private opinion that he was as good as the next one, himself. But it was very private indeed, and so the meeting went off well enough.

The night before the wedding Joan and Peter and Don walked a long way out along the Drive, and watched the moon go down below the Palisades. They walked home slowly, it was late and dark and silent at the edge of the city. The night crept into Don and moved him to unaccustomed feeling.

"You two," he said, "are very nearly all I have. I don't want any more." He groped for words as they walked on. "I . . . I hope . . . it means all the world to me to have things go right with you, old people." He was silent, and Peter

smiled at Joan and laid his arm across Don's shoulders.

"Doesn't Helen count at all?" Joan asked, but Don did not answer.

The next day, before their parents, they were married. Joan took the matter serenely but Peter felt young to have his father watching him, and his mother cried. When Joan had said her yes in a voice that trembled ever so slightly and when he too had said his yes, it seemed to him that a great organ should have answered, pealing through the room. The lack of it was almost awkward, as though a ghostlike director had waved his baton and no music had sounded where there should have been music. Behind him his mother cried a little. And when at last he was pronounced Joan's husband and she his wife, a great rush of tenderness and holiness flooded him and he would gladly have winked the tears from his eyes, but that he saw his father bustling forward, and then there were no tears to wink.

There followed a wedding luncheon; exuberantly merry, to which Don came with a huge box of roses for Joan, and then the three friends walked across the Park to their tenement. There Don left the man and his wife, Peter and Joan Kindred, to their tiny home, and walked slowly and alone back over the way they had come. Dusk drifted across the city from the east, the voices grew faint, the sounds died away. In their tenement the stove burned warm and bright, and four

chops sizzled in a low pan; a pungent and pleasant smell of cooking filled the room. Joan moved happily about, and Peter sat sprawled in a chair watching her. It was their home, these three rooms, their own home, its ruddy space to hold them close against all the world. There they would be when the gleaming dishes were washed and put away, and there they would be the whole night long; when dawn broke in the east they would be there. And there Peter would come ever after and find Joan forever and ever . . . let no man put asunder. . . .

From above the stove, the firelight a-glint on her hair, she smiled at him and her slim fingers blew him a kiss. He rose and peered in at the two little side rooms; in one the two plain beds and the dresser, in the other a couch, a chair, a bookcase. It seemed to him that they welcomed him merrily. He tiptoed across the room to where Joan stood by the stove, and standing beside her he prodded a chop inquisitively with a fork.

"Joan," he said soberly, "we're married."

"Peter," Joan said, "you watch these chops, and I'll set the table. But be very careful, dear, for chops are fearfully, fearfully expensive now."

"You dear, silly people," Helen cried, after she had with extravagant delight explored the corners and the closets of the tenement, and curling herself up on the couch, had realized suddenly that Joan was really married, and the four of them

were together again, "why on earth didn't you have your wedding in a church, all alone?"

"Phaugh!" Joan exclaimed, "and have a lot of unreality tacked on to it, and things we don't believe in?"

"But the music, Joan, and the quiet. Of course a contract is an idea, a principle,—but what on earth is a Justice of the Peace?"

"We didn't want music, Helen."

"It's so much more beautiful, though."

Here Don gave voice to a sound resembling a roar, and Helen bridled up at once.

"That's all very well," she said, "but marriage is a beautiful thing, and it ought to be made as beautiful as it can, and you needn't think you can sit there and laugh, Don Mark, because it's something that ought to go down through life as the most splendid and holy . . ."

At that point her voice was buried under the combined scorn of Don and Joan, but Peter sat silent; indeed he sympathized with Helen and felt that she was right. He too would have liked music; his emotional being, deeply stirred at his marriage, had yet craved a deeper stirring, a greater beating of wings, a loftier soaring beyond the limits of his understanding, beyond the limits of his own power, to tremble upon ineffable things. Although his marriage had been splendid, it had not been beautiful, and even then he had felt the lack of music to sweep his spirit up beyond the power of his body to hold it. Helen,

though she was downed, was entirely right; a Justice of the Peace was exceedingly Carverian, but very barren after all. And Peter wondered if Carverian barrenness were so tremendously essential. But that sounded like treason.

To Peter it was a recurrent miracle to wake each morning and find Joan sleeping in her prim white bed beside his; to hurry to the cubicle they called the den and there to dress, hopeful that he would be able to have breakfast ready for her. But she was always dressed first, and the kettle was singing and bubbling on the stove when he was ready. Breakfast in the sunny room was like a quiet benediction before the full sweep of the day. Then he would go grandly out through the gateway of the tenements, striding along very manfully to work, with a fine spirit to whistle in his mind. But once in the office it was no easy matter to concentrate upon the business in hand, with his thoughts the morning long moving with Joan about the three sunny rooms, washing and tidying, and then across the streets of the city with her upon an earnest quest for work. For Joan must find a place for herself very soon, or their small capital would dwindle to nothing.

At noon she called for him, and they went out together along the broad, crowded, tumbled avenue, among a rush of clerks and stenographers and factory girls, and lunched together in a large bakery where white-aproned waitresses ran independently and impersonally about. The room was

gloomy and close, and smelled of cheap food, the narrow brown tables were crowded with an ill-favored and fugitive rabble, eating from thick, heavy crockery. They could do no more than smile at one another there, among the people, and through the noise and the clatter of eating. Yet it was worth all manner of things to be together at all. Then they walked up and down Fifth Avenue in the sun, and talked of Joan, of where she had been and what she had done and what she would be doing, and watched the myriad motors stream slowly past them, and the well-groomed, hurrying women intent upon their shopping. Or they walked along the brown-stone dignity of Madison Avenue, past the waiting motors drawn up at the curb, until it was time for Peter to be back in his office again.

And finally he would come home through the blue evening among the dull, impersonal crowds, out of the hurry, the heat, the jangled noises and the swiftness of people, into the three little rooms and the night outside, the comfortable chair and Joan, the news of her day, and the beloved sight of her again. But there was cooking to be done then, and later dishes to be washed, a thin discordance in the peacefulness of home-coming. It would be pleasanter just to sit and talk. Yet it was jolly enough to putter away at china and cut up vegetables and wipe off silver with Joan there, moving about so lightly and precisely. In the bare stillness of the close rooms they seemed to be

shut entirely away by themselves; New York was like some other city, far to the west. They were off the track of familiar routes; their friends and Peter's family lived somewhere distantly. Peter was glad that he was so far from his family. They had all come over the first Sunday, moving like a silent caravan through the slums, depressed by the dirty streets and the innumerable shouting children, and then they had sat crowded and silent in the tenement, father and mother, Edith and Eddie, and even the irrepressible Eddie, after a few wilted remarks, was subdued. When they had gone, Joan had smiled at Peter pathetically and had suggested that the two of them go out for a breath of air, but they hardly knew where to go, for there was no quiet anywhere near by, but roaring streets and avenues. And there was supper to get.

Very often Don and Helen came to supper, with large white paper bags, chicken, pickles, bread, what not, for Joan had insisted that she could not possibly afford to feed them whenever they came, and so they always brought a tribute of some sort, and Helen stole jams and jellies from her mother's big pantry, and carried them hidden in her muff. But the four of them managed to rob the cooking of its seriousness, and to make ridiculous the drying of plates, and that was always a great relief to Peter.

Indeed, it seemed as though they brought Cambridge with them to the slums, and olden uncon-

cern and blitheness, and with the lamps lighted and the dinner cooking it was hard to believe that the swift gray river that flowed narrowly by the end of the street was not the Charles after all.

And then one evening Joan came home with a small bottle of very bad red wine and great news. She put the wine triumphantly down on the table, and the two of them stood back to look at it.

"Peter, dear," Joan said gravely, "you're not to get drunk."

On the morrow she would become officially no less a personage than the secretary of the business manager of a certain great magazine. Peter was astounded at such good fortune, but Joan took it quite as a matter of course.

"But, Peter," she said, "why not?"

"However did you do it?" he asked in amazement.

"I think he was glad to get me. He should have been," Joan said seriously.

Solemnly they filled two glasses with the bitter red wine, and clinked them together. In high spirits they toasted Joan's unexpected salary. Indeed, they were to be fabulously wealthy . . . together they had thirty dollars a week. It was a great deal, and it seemed rather as though life were willing soon to give them all they asked, and that was little enough.

"Joan," said Peter, "we shall need someone now to look after us a bit."

"Yes, I suppose we shall. Though I might be

able to do everything. Still, I think it would be a good thing to have a woman to clean our dishes after breakfast and to cook our supper."

They found a Mrs. Mulligan the next day, a large lady with gray hair and one eye. To her they entrusted their flat, and went gloriously off to work the morning after.

Peter was home first that evening. As he entered the door, a fearful odor of burning frightened him. With trembling fingers he switched on the light.

The gas stove was going merrily, and on it glowed a frying-pan with the charred remains of what had been once some sort of vegetable. The table was set, and on a platter lay four dead and greasy-looking chops, stone cold. Peter stood looking at them helplessly, in utter and futile dismay.

It was left to Joan to voice a protest, and that she did, the next morning.

"I'm a union worker," said Mrs. Mulligan.

"And does that mean that at five o'clock you simply walk out and leave everything behind you in a perfect mess?" Joan asked.

"If you don't like it, you can come home earlier," Mrs. Mulligan told her. "I don't have to be working for the likes of you. My sister's uncle is a great man in Canada, I'll have you know. I was born in a grand place myself. I needn't work if I don't want to. I had a son would have kept me in grand style with an autee-

mo-bile if he was living. But he died. It's a sad world." She wept a little. "I don't have to be working for the likes of you," she wound up finally, "and you can just come home earlier."

So Mrs. Mulligan was dismissed from service, and so was a Mrs. Shiplivsky some few days later, when Joan, coming home unexpectedly at noon, found that good lady comfortably ensconced in a chair, a whisky bottle in one hand and a newspaper in the other.

The slums seemed to be entirely drained of helpers at that point, Mrs. Mulligan and the Mrs. Shiplivsky being the only ladies apparently on the whole east side with the necessary leisure and temperament for the friendly business of house-keeping. Since Joan knew well that an experienced maid was entirely beyond her resources, she was obliged to shoulder the burden herself. But as she told Peter, she was happier for knowing that no miserable creature was dirtying her little home. Yet it was no slight task to come home at half-past six and start supper at once. It was an hour before they could be ready, or even an hour and a half, and that brought supper at eight, and they were very hungry then. They could not be through cleaning and tidying until late, and so there seemed to be no time for reading or for anything, for that matter, save cooking and cleaning, and then cooking and cleaning all over again.

But Peter's mother looked with almost a thrill upon her bohemian children, one of them an ad-

vertising man, and one of them on the staff of a certain great magazine, and both of them so romantically happy in the slums . . . imagine!

Well . . . they were happy enough, Lord knows, laughing their trouble away as best they could. And if Peter's heart grew hot and rebellious at all Mulligans and Shiplivskys, it was stirred, too, with a strange and troubled tenderness for the eager, slim woman beside him, a dumb tenderness that swept through him like music, that cried mutely for some expression. He kissed the tips of her fingers, and his spirit struggled with wings in his breast; he wanted to kneel before her, to lose himself in a passion of articulate speech. He could do no more than hold her very tight, and help with the dishes.

It was entirely as they had dreamed of living, and yet Peter wondered sometimes if it were possible that their dream in its broad sweep had troubled itself too little with Mulligans. And with Joan's slender health to guard, it was less like treason to wonder.

For a while an unfortunate succession of engagements that Helen could not break, and Don's work at law school kept them away from the tennement, and so it was nearly a fortnight after the Shiplivsky incident that they finally came again, together, for supper. By then Joan and Peter were growing just a bit lonely for them.

"My dears," Helen announced as she came impetuously through the door, "we've brought you

the most entirely beautiful pie you ever saw in your life. Didn't we, Don? And there were perfectly fascinating cakes as well, but he wouldn't let me buy any. Oh, dear! But I do like you, anyway," she told him comfortingly.

Don said little, but he was content just to be there again with Peter and Joan, and watched them half anxiously, gravely happy. It seemed as though he had put all his own hopes and beliefs into their hands, as though he had given his own life into the keeping of that tenement, and Peter and Joan. And Helen, too, in her own way, watched Joan and Peter anxiously and more sharply than they thought, while she bustled about and opened packages and peeked into closets.

Joan set them all to work at once. Don's blond head was bent over a bowl into whose thick yellow depths he peeled potatoes with a tremendous carving knife. Opposite him Peter meekly cut up carrots, and later washed the leaves of a head of lettuce very carefully under the faucet of the sink. Helen set the little round table with four crowded places, and assisted everybody with everything, while Joan, imperious and urgent, moved the pots about on the stove, lighted the gas jets, opened doors, and gave directions.

"Peter," Don said in a low voice, "Joan looks a bit tired, don't you think?" Peter nodded his head, but Joan, overhearing it, laughed lightly.

"Joan," Helen said, "you absolutely must take care of yourself. Mustn't she, Don?"

"My dear," Joan answered, "I have Peter to take care of, and that's enough for anyone. His buttons fall off by millions: I have never seen such buttons."

"She's really working awfully hard at the office," Peter said.

"Well, that's fine," Don said sagely, "but I wouldn't overdo it."

They were at supper, the table piled awkwardly with dishes. Joan brought things sizzling over from the stove; they all made a great business of eating, and whatever they lacked in food or comfort they made up in laughter. The three had chairs, but Peter sat on a low rocking chair, and rocked up and down over his food, his head and shoulders just above the table. Joan did cook unusually well, yet even the worst cooking in the world would have tasted good enough to those four together in the tiny yellow-lighted room with the big stove and the china closet and the great windows; only Peter thought that the carrots would have been better if he had been less familiar with them. Under the table their knees all bumped together.

"I'll grow more used to it after a time," Joan said, while she poured cocoa into the four cups and insisted with a gesture that Peter eat all his carrots.

"I've been to see the Gary people," Helen said.

"Have you?" Joan cried eagerly. "What did they say?"

"I can work there a bit if I want to, and learn what they're doing. Of course I'd get no pay for it."

"You don't care, do you?"

"I don't need it, I suppose . . . and yet, you always feel differently about a thing if you're paid for it."

"I think it would be an awfully good experience for you, Helen," Joan said.

"I suppose it would. I may do it. Ultimately, I imagine, that they'd give me a regular position."

"You bet you'll do it, young lady," Don said sternly.

"Joan," cried Helen plaintively, "will you make that man stop trying to order me around all the time? I tell you, I can't even breathe without his permission."

"He's perfectly right," Joan decided. "Reach behind you, Don, and get the lettuce like a dear man."

"What is more," said Don to Helen, "if you don't behave yourself you'll have no pie."

"You're a perfect pig, and I'll go right down to a settlement and conduct a Bible class for little children . . . there!

"Then I shall tell these people what you said about them the night you cried and . . .

"Don Mark! if you don't be still instantly I . . . I'll pinch your baby when you have one!"

"What did she say, Don?" Peter demanded, laughing.

"She said that everybody she loved was getting married," Don said brazenly, "and that she didn't know how she'd live all alone without you two, and that if anything ever happened to you . . ."

"Oh, dear," Helen wailed, and hid her face in her napkin, but Joan stopped a moment on her way to the stove and rumpled Helen's hair.

But after all, Joan was tired, and there was no gainsaying it, although she tried in a thousand ways to hide it. She needed rest, and there was no way of resting; little things accumulated and had to be done, cooking, cleaning, the minor parts of housekeeping, and then long and unaccustomed hours at the office. The color went out of her cheeks, but she resented fiercely the implication that it was beyond her strength.

"Don't be absurd," she told Peter, "I'm not doing any more than other people are doing."

Autumn was growing sere and slipping into winter. There were fewer voices on the street at night, and the sun at morning through the window was pleasant and warm on the breakfast table. The court of the tenement as the sun fell more and more to the south grew gloomier and quieter, and lamps at night were clearer in the cold. The wind began to boom from the west, and the sky to grow faintly gray, as though from the far north

shadows of snow darkened the clouds. More and more Peter was aware of the insistent odor of the model tenements; it seemed to him that it was an odor of pathos, of unequal struggle, of unwilling helplessness. Sometimes from the windows of these little flats tired and wan faces of women peered out at the street, where mothers walked with their baby carriages or neat children played gloomily among shouting muckers. It was a pathetic fight for respectability, waged against uneven odds, for self-respect, for cleanliness, a battle fought by failures, who must have realized their failure and yet who clung tenaciously to the little they could keep from their hopes and faith. Here they could still be clean, could still have some mite of sun and air and sky, could still treasure some bit of finery, and enjoy privacy. Here, too, through the well-built doorways, they could walk without entire shame, and yet the odor of defeat persisted, saddening Peter despite himself. Beyond, the thrumming slums waited, teeming, squalid and ominous, shrill and defiant, low-voiced and uneasy, restless and brooding. Faint circles grew beneath Joan's eyes; at night when the dishes were washed she went to bed and fell asleep at once, and in the morning she was slow at rising. Peter, too, was tired. But Joan said only that she must grow used to it, that she was unaccustomed.

"Old one," Don said to him as they walked up town together, "what's the matter. Joan looks

frightfully, and you're thin and tired-looking yourself. What's wrong?"

"Nothing, Don . . . except the theory of labor, perhaps. Carver would say that there was nothing wrong." He spoke half bitterly.

"Fiddlesticks! Peter, tell me what the trouble is."

"Why, it's nothing, Don . . . just little things of utterly no importance. Joan's tired, and she can't rest up. I hardly know what to say . . . just these silly little things that have to be done—cooking—cleaning—and then all day at the office."

"You can't go on getting more and more tired, Peter."

"I know, I know," Peter said wearily. "But what is there to do? At noon we lunch together at a miserable bakery, and so we must have a decent supper. And that means cooking, and when we get up, we must have breakfast. And that means more cooking. And who is to do all that?"

"But heavens above, man, can't you get a woman in to help?"

Peter shook his head. "That's just the rotten part of it," he said. "People do their own work in the slums."

Don whistled apprehensively. "You'll have to find someone somewhere," he said.

"There's no one, Don. And if there were a woman who had the time, she'd be too proud to

do our work. You don't understand the slums. People are ashamed to cook and to wash dishes in this country. And after five o'clock they must all be home."

They walked on for a bit in silence, and then Peter continued hesitatingly, almost as though he were trying to straighten things out in his own mind.

"Somehow," he said, "I'm getting to feel differently about things, Don. These people that I meet, the folk I run up against and have dealings with—they're all so miserably different from what I had expected and imagined. Sometimes I catch myself wondering if I haven't been too enthusiastic, too eager after all, too optimistic."

"Oh, come, Peter," Don said, "you're a bit low, you know."

"No, it's not that entirely. But Lord knows, to build, to produce for the state, you need folk to help. You need a bit of co-operation, a bit of help here and there. You need some sort of tolerance, some amount of thoughtfulness in other people. All these folks are out for themselves in a blind panic."

"The man who builds truest produces most for the state."

"He has no chance to. The man who boasts louder outsells him and enlarges and finally runs him out of business."

"In the long run——" Don began.

"Hell with the long run," Peter said gloomily,

"I know the principle of the silly thing as well as you do."

"In the long run," Don went on calmly, "the man who makes real things comes out on top."

"Oh, I suppose so," Peter admitted wearily, "if he's well subsidized to start with, and can live on next to nothing for half a century."

Finally Peter broke out crossly: "I tell you, men build up their whole lives on the fact that they can fool other men. Perfectly naïvely. And they pile up tremendous fortunes."

"It's for you to fight against that sort of thing," Don said.

"But what have I to fight with? Faith in the right, belief in Carver, and fifteen dollars a week. I'll lose the fifteen dollars if ever I insist too loudly on the rest."

"Success . . ." began Don sternly.

"Akh," Peter said quickly, "I must live, Don. Later . . . all the moralizing you please."

They walked together up Fifth Avenue toward Fifty-ninth Street, past the bronze doors and broad windows of great shops, past the gray buildings, past the buttressed towers of St. Patrick's, the deep-roomed, portly clubs, the silent houses. Evening was growing in the city, and street lamps burned a pale yellow in the twilight along the gleaming avenue.

"All this," Peter said, "goes through me like some old, stately music. I want it, I want it awfully . . . I want to be part of it, to know the

people, to be someone among them . . . to make it somehow my city."

"You're tired, old one," Don said, "and gloomy. You need a bit of Joan to cheer you up. It wouldn't be fair to argue with you."

"Yes," Peter said. And then, "Oh, I wish . . . I wish . . . that Joan and I . . ."

He was suddenly silent, curiously troubled by something.

But whatever it was, he could not speak of it to Don.

Ultimately, however, they did find a woman to help them somewhat, to do their breakfast dishes and the beds, and to start their supper before they came home. It cost them almost half of Joan's earnings, and left them little for food, but Peter felt that it was well worth the sacrifice, and blithely minimized his appetite, and that was not good for him.

Snow fell over the city before Christmas; in a day it was black mud in the gutters, and dirty low piles in the middle of the streets. For a morning, while it had been white, the city had seemed passing sunny—and cheerful, but afterwards the city was gloomier and more despondent than ever. A moist chill rose from the pavements and drifted in the wind, and Peter shivered in his coat.

It was a bitter matter to Peter that he had so little money to spend on Joan's Christmas. There was not even enough to buy her a suitable gift,

and so he stole a stocking of hers, and roamed about the shops whenever he could, to find something to go in it. The great department stores were fairly seething with people, with all the women in the world, he thought, scented and harassed. Jostled by crowds and unnoticed by saleswomen, he was fairly unsuccessful in his search, and could buy her nothing but a pair of mittens, and hoped desperately that she had none. For the rest, he filled the stocking with little trinkets and fruit and candy that he bought at small corner stores sweet smelling with Christmas trees arrayed on the street before their windows, and hung the stocking at the foot of her bed in the dark, with a sore heart for the lightness of it. Yet in the morning Joan's surprised happiness at the mittens and the childish delight with which she spread the trinkets out before her on her counterpane, touched him so deeply that he came near crying because he loved her and all that he said and did was so inadequate.

Her parents sent a huge box from Boston. It smelled deliciously of frosty wood, and when opened contained a little of very nearly everything in the world, and only Don and Helen were needed then, to make a celebration of it. Helen arrived first, but Peter thought that when Don came in Helen grew a bit quiet and self-conscious.

"What happened, dear?" he asked Joan that night when the two friends had gone.

"I've wanted to tell you, Peter," she said to him gravely. "Helen is in love with Don."

Peter stared at Joan with an open mouth. Such a thought had never entered his head. He began to laugh quietly.

"Why," he cried, "isn't that perfectly fine?"

"No, dear, it's not," Joan said gravely, and he grew sober at once. After all, it was not. It came over him that it would be a one-sided love affair. Don was not in love with Helen; Peter knew that of a certainty. He remembered that Don had called her too emotional once; he began to feel saddened and helpless.

"How do you know, Joan?" he asked.

"Helen told me . . . of course. And I'm very much afraid that it will spoil things, Peter."

"Do you know, I thought that Helen seemed a little subdued . . . ever after that supper when she said she'd pinch his baby. But heavens, I hadn't the faintest idea that it was anything but my own imagination."

"The worst of it is that now she'll be shy and self-conscious, and Don will detest that. You've never met her family, have you, Peter? Her father is a great big man with a curious, stubborn temper. I've heard him shout and roar at dinner and I've seen him put his feet up on the table, just to torment his wife before guests. And Helen's mother keeps dinning into Helen's ears how splendid all the other daughters are, and how ungrateful Helen is herself. And the two of them,

in a thousand little ways, try to make Helen think that she's an awfully, awfully inferior sort of person. I don't know whether they really mean to do it, or not, but the harm was all done long ago."

"It's miserable, isn't it," Peter said,—“can't we buck Helen up?”

"No . . . no. There's no way of doing it. She needs . . . Oh, she needs success. Either a man, or some big work. You see, she has nothing to go by, dear. No man has ever made love to her. And she's never really done anything. That's why I'm so anxious for her to take up Gary work, and make something of it."

"Hanged if I don't go to Don and jolly well tell him what I think of him," Peter said. A mighty wave of quixotic affection for Joan swept through him, and carried along with it all women's lives. Because of her, and from his great happiness, he wanted to do battle for the happiness of all sad women. He felt old and wise and radiantly capable of settling all the world's small troubling out of hand. Joan rebuked him gravely.

"Hanged if you don't jolly well go to bed now, dear," she said.

As the days passed, quietness drew in on Helen more and more, and little by little she came to sit silently in a corner, watching Joan and Peter with wistful intentness, and rarely looked at Don; when she spoke to him, it seemed to Peter's

anxious mind that she hesitated and stumbled. All the gleefulness of her spirit seemed to have been subdued; she appeared to be questioning herself. When she rallied Don it was with a curious faint note of defiance in her voice. Don, alone, noticed nothing, and for that Peter gave due thanks. Despite his first excited quixotism, he knew that if Don thought for a moment that Helen was in love with him, he, too, would grow troubled and silent, would try to keep away from her.

It was strange, how singularly complex it made life, how shadowed and worried and uneasy, this self-consciousness about love. If only, Peter said to himself, people didn't think about it so much, and if it weren't so miserably necessary for their bodies, and if it could only be administered in little pills, what a tremendous lot of work people could do.

But why was Peter himself so restless?

Helen, sadly in need of bucking up, had a long talk with Joan.

"I'm such an inferior sort of person," she said. "No man could like me very much."

"Don't be absurd," Joan exclaimed. "How can you say such a thing?"

"Because . . . and he needs a clever woman, with all sorts of self-control. I'm just a dabbler. And even mother thinks that I am ugly."

"Oh," cried Joan, "darn your mother."

But if affairs had tangled themselves on the

east side, and had grown so very complicated, they had gone smoothly enough on the west side.

"Peter, my dear," his mother whispered to him on a night in January, "I have a secret for you." She was excited about something, and after taking Peter's arm, drew him into her own room.

"Edith is engaged," she announced radiantly.

"Oh," said Peter blankly.

His mother licked her lips, as though she were rolling the news about in her mouth, and tasting it.

"To Eddie," she whispered in dramatic triumph.

Peter's first reaction was a sharp stabbing of displeasure, a feeling as though this sleek Eddie had come too close to him and were patting him familiarly on the back, as though, somehow, he had been made unfairly defenseless against that unpleasant creature. But his mother was extraordinarily well pleased. How she smiled . . . it occurred to him suddenly that Edith, too, must be tremendously happy.

"Well," he said, "isn't that fine?"

And it did seem vaguely pleasant that Edith should be engaged. Coming to consider the matter, Peter supposed that he would see little enough of his brother-in-law, after all, and if Edith were so well pleased with her choice . . . why, it would do. But Peter felt, too, that it would make small difference what he thought about the matter.

It was a relief at dinner to find Eddie a trifle subdued, and not inclined to any unusual familiar-

ity. Indeed, Eddie seemed suddenly halted in mid career, and appeared to be wondering what had happened to him. For a while Peter felt sorry for Eddie, and then sorry for Edith, and then impersonal and above the whole matter and sorry for no one at all. But his mother planned volubly innumerable affairs for the betrothed couple, and Edith, sitting beside her pleased father, fed Eddie small bits of bread, which he ate timidly.

The winter passed for that young couple in a round of dances. Snow came heavily in February, whirling through the narrow, deep streets, and after it came sturdy, poorly clothed men, with long shovels, and a light of hope in their eyes, re-kindled hope for the bit of work given them, men chattering in all manner of languages, blowing on their cold red hands, shovelling the snow into lumbering carts, to be dumped unceremoniously into the river.

"If only I could get those men into the country," Peter said to himself. And then he wondered if they'd not all come running back home again.

Two days of warm sun melted the remnants of the snow to black slush, and that was all of winter.

At such dances given for Edith as Peter could not politely refuse, he was introduced to the society of his sister's group. There he saw the ribbon king's daughter, and many other daughters,

identical to her save here or there in the matter of embellishment. There were a great many men patterned after Eddie. These men, caught in groups in the dressing room, consumed endless cigarettes; they seemed to have no faintest idea why they were there, nor did they impress Peter with knowing what their life was all about, but they were sure that it was important, nevertheless, and so when they discussed any matter, or spoke of social affairs, it was always in an energetic and weighty manner.

Peter was secretly troubled at these dances, troubled at the very prodigality of sex. There was something restless about all of it, something half barbaric and half passionate, yet half flip-pant and thoroughly careless, something old and spoiled, romance with the dust brushed from its wings, children unable to enjoy fairy stories.

He turned to a woman beside him.

"But I should think you'd grow so fearfully tired," he said.

She smiled at him pleasantly, and waved her fan. "I do," she answered, "I get awfully tired."

He looked at her with faint interest. Then he turned and waved his hand at the crowded room and the dancers.

"Tell me," he said, "how under the sun do you ever find time to think in all this?"

It was a bit out of her depth, and she pouted and toyed with her fan. It occurred to her finally to venture upon more familiar ground.

“They say that you’re a socialist and live in the slums, and everything,” she said brightly.

Peter looked at her gloomily.

“Not everything,” he answered patiently.

CHAPTER XI

WITH the first sluggishness of spring in the city, Peter's weekly salary was doubled. The amazing part of it was that it came entirely unexpected, the result of happy chance and a flare of impudence. It so happened that a very particular idea was needed for a very particular company that manufactured an excessively mediocre line of jellies.

"Oh, the devil," Peter said idly, when he heard about it, "why not take a lot of howling big space and advertise in direct public letters to the White House?"

"Do you mean to the President, Kindred?" asked a solicitor, who overheard him.

"No," said Peter with what he imagined was comic seriousness, "what would he do with a lot of jellies? To the President's wife, of course."

"There's something in that, you know," the solicitor muttered.

And the preposterous idea was taken, and the wages of the horrified Peter were doubled.

The next Saturday, with thirty dollars in his pocket, he walked home slowly, up Fifth Avenue and through the Park, from Fifty-ninth Street, and then east again at Seventy-second. In the Park the turgid breaking of winter was apparent. The sun of late afternoon slanted across the distant roof tops of the west side in full yellow, and a moist wind, grave and chilly, blew at him from the east. Old and forgotten snow lay scattered, half ice, half melted, gray with the passage of days, like tufts of dingy cotton caught in the crevices of rocks. There was a sweet smell of wet, sun-warmed, brown earth, and it mingled and drifted with the odor of asphalt, of pavements, of oil and motors and old gray snow. Here in the Park there was comparative quiet, save for the inescapable murmur of the city, and Peter let his thoughts drift to Cambridge.

To Cambridge . . . there was a deal of peacefulness in the very sound of it. It would be good to be there, in those level spaces, to rest and think things over. To look at his life through the little end of the telescope. To see Joan, too, from that untroubled and unhurried calm?

And yet Peter knew that he would find those spaces all too bare that had once been so richly fraught with quietness, the students passing and repassing upon their inexigent tasks all too young and untried. He had been away little less than a year, and already the old Peter was a curiously boyish fellow to him, with square, flat beliefs about

things, and an almost unbelievable enthusiasm. And the old house on Holyoke . . . what arguments had raged there! About what? He hardly knew . . . it seemed to him that from that quietness, that peace, that shining faith, he had come against the world to find—what? He thought of the office, his desk there, the shouting and brazen city below him, spread to the north; he thought of jellies and jams, and his fingers touched the crisp bills in his pocket. For an impudence he had been allowed to live, he and his faith.

“Carver,” he said to himself, “is the religion for a gentleman. But the first battle is for breath and the space to be a gentleman in.”

How bitterly he would have opposed that once, with the logic and the majesty of the state.

“I can’t bother with it now,” he said, “I have my breath and my food to get. Later, perhaps.”

Later he would build strongly for the state.

And still it would be good to be in Cambridge, to look back over his year from a perspective, to advance old enthusiasms against the city and watch their fate. It would be good to walk out through Waverly and sit again on that familiar wall, with spring breaking just so sluggishly over the fields and the hills of New England, to watch the low clouds pile up in the south, to think of matters very slowly and peaceably again, out of the hurry and press of them.

But not Joan.

As he had walked a year ago in Cambridge at

the end of winter, he walked now in the Park, considering Joan. And again he knew that his trouble was love, and again it was new and bewildering, but this time it brought him no content.

Gradually through the bleak winter, the mornings and evenings together, the hurried noons, the tide of desire had been growing in Peter, swell and gathering. He had watched it growing with curiosity, then bewilderment, and finally with alarm.

Little by little he had been made aware of a longing in him that was unsatisfied, and that he could not satisfy.

Slowly, but relentlessly, it had come over Peter that his love which had seemed so whole, so complete, so perfect, was growing, was demanding, was insisting. It broke on his bewilderment like the thunder of the sea on a light sea wall. Her slender body, the motions of her hands, the proud carriage of her head, the sweep of her hair from her temples, all these were in the ringing of that sea, and beat upon him with ever redoubling power. Yet there was no day when he could say "she is dearer to be now than she was yesterday." It was the slow, merciless rising of a tide. Her voice that he had always loved, stirred his body still more deeply. He kissed her; Peter was grown used to kisses, and the stirring was unsatisfied. His heart quickened at the suppleness of her body.

Little by little what he had of her grew to him

impalpable and fugitive. He wanted something to make Joan somehow real, to make her truly his own, one way or another, something to make her his own if he were there or if he were away, something he could pin on his body and wear. There was nothing to grasp at, nothing real about his life with her; it was an elusive happiness, forever hovering on the edge of something tremendous. He kissed her, and afterwards there was no difference in the world. He wanted something that would make a difference in the world when he had kissed her, something as true and as real as pain. The tide of his desire deepened in his body. He wanted something to compass it, to compass Joan, to compass everything in the world . . . to answer him . . .

After his coup, he had planned to surprise her with a great bunch of flowers. But when the time came for that surprise he was lost and overwhelmed at last in a mighty rush of tenderness that leaped the barriers he had built to hold it, and swept through him, wreaking havoc, mocking him, his love, his very life. It whirled him and smothered him like a lost woodsman in white water. His body was possessed of insufferable longing. He could buy her flowers indefinitely . . . he could buy her all the flowers in the world, and lose himself in roses at her feet. And out of them he'd come as rebellious, as unsatisfied, as ever. It wasn't *that* he wanted . . . not flowers."

And so, finally, through the slow spring after-

noon in the Park, he faced it gauntly . . . this thing . . . he wanted Joan . . . all of her . . . the way, he thought, he'd want a woman of the streets.

It had been a slow, slow awakening. He sat down on a bench and stared at himself. It frightened him, this unexpected declaration of his body. The thought of obtruding it upon Joan horrified him. He blamed himself bitterly for something, what, he did not know, but blamed himself over and over. It seemed to him that he was perverse and ridiculous, that a low fellow peeked out of him, that he had broken faith with himself. He felt helpless and muddled; he was ashamed, but half ecstatic.

Far away, indeed, was Cambridge, and the idyl of the year before, far away the unconcern of Holyoke, the serene and tempered reality of the Yard, the untroubled comings and goings. Sitting alone there on a bench in the Park, he pondered the brutality of his body and fought against it, he reaffirmed his old beliefs. They thundered down from Cambridge, a bright, Carverian regiment.

A man had no right to feel that way about his wife. It made a fearful mess of things.

Peter insisted grimly that, after all, he was no better than Eddie.

With that grimness something gaunt and hard crept into Peter's life for a while, and he found himself steeling his spirit against Joan, steeling

himself despairingly against the light touch of her hands, forcing himself to let pass unnoticed the thousand tiny ways she ministered to him. But if the two cool fingers she laid upon his mouth as she leaned across the breakfast table fled back to Joan at once, all morning long as he bent above his desk they lay ghostlike on his face. And if he shut his heart before her eager smile to be with him again at noon, it fled into his mind and haunted him until evening. There were many nights Peter lay awake staring hollow-eyed through the darkness at the dim and unprofaned white of her bed beside him, curbing the restless tossing of his body for fear of waking her. And Joan, awake, lay quietly for fear of waking him.

And so those two very, very young married people went pathetically through early spring, while Helen plunged desperately into Gary work, feverishly energetic and utterly in despair by turns, and Don with great wisdom and clarity of argument discussed polygamy.

"The state," he said, "is dependent upon its population. We need children, more children, all the children we can get. But the right sort. It's the important question to-day."

Here he would look triumphantly about him, and Helen would look at him in hypnotized misery. Then the tenement would reverberate with dreadful and merciless debate, and in the end they would all be hot and tired and angry.

"I am simply taking Carver to the logical extreme," he said. "A man should have as many children as he can support. A woman can only bear a certain number . . . so and so many . . . and keep her health and her usefulness to the group. In the case of the economically productive man, then, all those unborn children are a waste."

"Where will the extra women come from?" Joan asked.

"Some men . . . most men, in fact, can't produce enough food, enough goods, to care for the full number of children their wives could bear. So their wives will bear other families besides, for more economically successful men."

"But suppose they don't want to?" Peter asked scornfully.

"They'll be taught to want to. Monogamy is only a habit."

"You can't use people that way," Peter insisted hotly. "You won't get any children at all."

Don gestured largely. "You can't make me believe," he said, "that a decent, normal woman would find it such a terrible matter to bear the children of a decent, normal man."

Lord, how silly it was, and how blind and deaf and inhuman Don sounded to Peter. It was impossible to talk to him with any show of power; directly Peter mentioned any emotion whatsoever, Don heaped scorn upon him.

"Do you think a woman would share a man

with three other women just because he ran a factory or something?" Peter cried.

"A matter of habit and training."

Peter thought of surrendering Joan to some successful manufacturer of shaving soap, and boiled over.

"You *are* awfully stupid, you know," he cried.

"It would be rather hard on the poor man who loved his wife, wouldn't it?" Joan said. But she didn't look at Peter.

"I see no reason why it should be," Don insisted. "It's entirely a question of how you've been brought up to look at things. I know that I, for one, would give my wife gladly to the state, if I couldn't support enough children."

Peter glanced swiftly across at Helen, who was leaning back in her chair, plucking nervously at her dress. He turned to Don abruptly.

"You'll never have any children," he said. "They'll be frogs."

"They will not be frogs," Don answered angrily.

"Polywogs first . . . and then frogs."

"It seems to me," Helen said diffidently, "that none of us knows enough biology to talk about it very well."

"Rot," said Don.

"Weren't most of the rich men the sons of terribly poor people?" Joan asked.

Finally Peter grew entirely upset.

"What do you know about anything?" he said

to Don. "What do you know about life and people and . . . and love, damn it?"

He shrieked the last words at the top of his voice.

"Rot," said Don comfortably.

From such arguments Peter came with a growing horror of intemperance, and a gathering belief in the futility of carrying anything to its logical extreme. He began then to entertain a very healthy doubt that life, which seemed to him to be growing more and more complex with each successive day, could be brought so logically and lucidly to any simplicity after all, and he wondered if a man could do better than to take hold of some general principle big enough and vague enough to embrace everything, and then confess frankly to agnosticism, grow old, experience, learn, and bend according to the blowing of knowledge. For instance, he thought, life must be a vastly different thing to his father than it was to him, and yet at heart, was there such a profound and fundamental difference there? No more, surely, than the difference already between his attitude and that of Don. Yet had they not both of them started from the same concept . . . nay, had not all three of them started almost so? Life, work, children, home and peace . . . and yet the different lives of the three of them had brought them finally to what seemed entirely different beliefs. After all . . . faith was of neces-

sity empiric. Peter stressed those five concepts differently than his father had done, and added, from the vantage of his generation, still two more words, the state, and the gentleman. Don, adding the same words, stressed still differently, and Peter's father would have called Don an anarchist, a menace to the country, an immoral fellow, a criminal (if he were very angry) and possibly a lunatic. But back of it all? . . .

There were more than just his own problems to worry Peter.

"Joan," he said to her in April, "I have never seen Helen look so badly."

"I know," Joan answered, "she looks very thin and pale."

Joan, too, was all too pale, but Peter blamed it on the spring, and the difficult winter, and New York, and the slums, and any number of things besides.

"It's miserable the way he carries on about polygamy," Peter said, apparently irrelevant.

Joan nodded. "It is miserable," she said soberly.

They were sitting together after supper in their narrow den, Joan curled up on the couch, and Peter in the chair. He lighted a pipe and sucked at it for a moment or two in silence.

"It's sort of hopeless," he said at last. Joan sighed.

"There's nothing to do," she said, "but next year I shall try to get Helen away."

"Away?"

"Anywhere; west, perhaps. The more she sees Don, the more it hurts her, I think. She's never been in love before, and it's very bad for her."

"Yes, I suppose it is. Worse than for most folk."

"You see, she's so fearfully frank to herself about it. And then there's the feeling of her own worthlessness, and she can't get the better of that. And she really needs . . . because she's so aroused . . . her first love . . . and at her age . . ."

"That's just the wretched part of it."

They were both uncomfortably silent, while the blood throbbed in Peter's temples.

"It seems unfair, Peter," Joan said softly.

"Joan," Peter said, "what's the matter with all of us? Why are we so much more at odds with life than our parents were?"

"Do you think we are, Peter?"

"It seems so to me. I don't believe that they were ever troubled so. They grew up and fell in love, and controlled themselves ably and were married and had children. But we all of us seem to be torn about so."

"Perhaps they were, too."

"No, I am sure. Sex to them seems to have presented so much an easier problem. But we . . . we face it and understand it, and then . . . suddenly we're helpless and totally wrecked. And still we're so much franker and wiser and braver about it."

"Perhaps that's it, Peter."

He smoked for a time, thoughtfully. "Perhaps," he said at last.

"It may be that we are all too much like children, too inquisitive, too anxious to peek into all manner of things, and so we hurt ourselves."

"You mean that we think too much of sex?"

"Sometimes I think so. Sometimes I think we talk too much about it, that we're too self-conscious. I wonder if it's good, after all, to think of it so much."

"But that is the only way to master it, dear."

"Sometimes I wonder if it is," Joan said.

"Our parents never bothered so, did they?"

"I don't know . . . I imagine not. But we begin to talk of things so early. We go beyond love making, and understand things. We're biologists, after a fashion. And then when we fall in love we're so old and wise, and the love making, the courting seems like the play of children."

"And then we're caught," Peter said bitterly.

Joan looked at him intently, but he was not looking at her. He spoke hurriedly.

"We wander into the kitchen like so many silly lobsters, bundled up in a shell of self-control . . . and we brandish a paper claw of knowledge . . . and then we're eaten up."

"Yes," Joan said, "and perhaps if we just went in like onions . . ."

"Without anything at all to defend us . . . potatoes, rather . . . not onions . . ."

"In the meanwhile, someone is making a meal of poor Helen," Joan said soberly.

"I . . . I don't think people ought to talk about babies so much," Peter said a bit uncertainly. "At least, not until they're married."

"Heavens," said Joan.

But it did seem to Peter as though Helen would have been far happier if she had known sex only as a shy young miss, thought love to be a sweetness of moonlight and words and prettiness and music. How very much happier she would be sitting by some old-fashioned casement, spinning old-fashioned dreams of Don, all the insistent tumult of her body to be miraculously stilled somehow with a kiss. Peter thought of Edith, her untroubled amours, her complacent marriage at last, Edith stirred with nothing greater than curiosity and moonlight her life long, delicately ignorant of babies.

Through April he had a deal to think of that concerned only Peter and Joan Kindred and the city. The street car men went on strike.

From the western fortresses of organized labor agents had been at work in the city for longer than the city knew. And so, one morning, the alarmed burghers read in their morning papers above their coffee cups that these men had demanded so much from the companies for their employees, and that the companies had refused to deal with them. In two days, jammed with screaming headlines, with mass meetings of car

men, with furious talk and oratory and peculiarly diffident voting, the strike was declared, and the city aghast, found its transit crippled. But not for long. Militia came down from up state and sat in the armories or paraded the streets very fierce and bold, and new green men manned the cars and bumped them into each other and ran them bewildered about the city. Slowly transit developed, and the strikers, growing angry, took to rocks and bottles. Then there were riots all over the city, and a great seething and shouting in the slums; policemen rode on the platforms of cars, behind wire netting, and platoons of reserves cheerfully broke the heads of men and women and had their own heads broken. The city, weary and forlorn, crowded the sparse cars, or walked bitterly; tiny public motors creaked and bumped up Fifth Avenue loaded to the capacity of their springs with late and footsore humanity. The companies stood firm, majestically dignified, and the organizers from the west gave out dark interviews to the newspapers in which they promised all manner of dangerous affairs if they did not at once have their own way, while the strikers grew hungrier, and the slums seethed.

Where was the fault? The newspapers took sides with the strikers, for their long hours, their unfair treatment, and their unfortunate families. Helen went in with them heart and soul, and painted the morals of the companies a dreary black; she went to what mass meetings she could,

joined a relief committee, came into the tenement with flashing eyes and excited phrases, storming and bitter. But Peter and Joan took no sides. They walked to their offices and walked home, hating the strike intensely, but they blamed neither the car men nor the companies.

"I'll not believe these tales I hear of the horrors of being a motorman," Peter said.

And again, "I know that the presidents of the companies are fat and wealthy and impudent. We'd have very much worse car service if they were skinny and worried."

Yet it seemed to Peter that the companies were no more impudent than the car men would be, if they could.

"For the rest," he said, "it's a question of whether I want the bricklayers and carpenters and the masons to be more powerful in this country than the engineers and the scientists and the factory owners. And I don't. Still, it's all unfair."

They were walking home together at evening, crossing Second Avenue beneath the gloomy shadow of the silent elevated. Half way down the block a car was stalled, and a crowd of people were gathering. Joan and Peter stopped to watch; the crowd about the car swirled and pushed; there was a crash of glass, a confused shout. The folk eddied and whirled, broke and closed again. Through the momentary opening, Peter caught sight of a policeman with a battered hat, using his night stick.

"Come on home," Peter said.

A whistle shrilled and a squad of bluecoats came running from around a corner. A mounted officer galloped along the cobbles, leaning low in his saddle. The mob groaned and shouted; stones flew; the bluecoats flung themselves into the people. Out of the doors of the tenements grimy men and women ran howling and screaming, with sticks and bottles, clubs, old chairs. Peter saw a man lurch across the street holding his head, blood trickling through his fingers. The mob broke and gave way, and suddenly, Peter and Joan were in the very midst of them, struggling to keep their feet.

Terror seized Peter, disgust, fear of the beating clubs, the sound of them whacking at people's heads, the howling of the mob, the surge of bodies. He held Joan close and struggled blindly to be free of them, his heart in his throat.

And then a stone grazed Joan's face, and cut her cheek. At her faint cry Peter stood erect, with wide open eyes. An unholy might blazed in him; he was filled with fury; his nostrils opened broadly. His slight body leaped like a cat at a shouting laborer in front of him; he picked up the broken leg of a chair and beat his way out of the mob like a passionate wildcat. Stones hit him, fists struck at him; guarding Joan with one arm, he felt nothing but anger and hate and the desire to kill someone. His club beat onto the backs of men and women alike; he saw nothing, recognized

nothing. Inarticulate sounds came from his mouth. Bloody, torn, disheveled, the two of them hurried down the street toward their tenement. A hulking fellow, taking him for a striker, grinned at him and shouted something in a foreign tongue. Peter snarled a curse at him, and hurried on.

It was only the utmost passion of tenderness for his wife that kept him at her side, bathing her cheek, kissing her white face. He was like an aroused, caged animal; he wanted to go back there and beat up people, to drive the whole world into the East River. He breathed unevenly, and his eyes glowed. He hated the people, hated them with every fibre of his being, the slums, the mob, all the fury, the violence, the riot they stood for. He wanted to feel his club beat into men's faces again.

That night his smouldering anger blazed again at the astounded Don.

"No one asked my help," he said, "or anyone's. They started throwing rocks. Because they couldn't have their own way. I hope to God they starve to death. I hope they have their beastly faces pushed into the mud so hard they never come up. I hope . . ."

Joan looked at Peter in wonder. Down the block, too far for them to hear, a woman wailed incessantly. They had taken her husband to jail, and first they had broken his head.

By April's end Peter was moody and irritable,

sallow, and troubled with headaches that camped at the base of his skull. The office bothered him, the swift way things went on, the complacent confidence, the easy criticism, the daily writing and rewriting, puzzling, composing. He went at matters grimly, turning out flawless work, and sneering at it as it left his desk. He wanted to shout to his room companions to be quiet, to quit their boasting, their ready mimicry of successful things, their personal chatter. He was sick of impudence, of the eternal glitter of brass over the whole city, cheaters decked out in tinsel. He wanted to cry to the men along the streets to hold up their heads and look at the sky; it seemed to him that all New Yorkers were a nervous, harassed, intent and ill-favored folk, thin and mangy or blunt and worried, bitten with appetites, washed in lukewarm sentiment.

At home he controlled his morose humor with difficulty. It was a pathetic and peculiar consolation to him that, after all, Joan was his wife, that he would always be with her, that she loved him, and yet it was the very skeleton of a satisfaction, a gaunt and empty framework, through which his desires poured unheld. His life was like a sieve to hold the tremendous pressure of his love; it rushed through and wasted itself upon thin air.

After supper he watched her moving through the lamplight, with sombre eyes that seemed to be set upon a point far beyond her, as one listens

to music, while through the opened window floated the voices of the slums, the rattle of wagons, the low-toned odors of the city in spring.

In the morning he walked swiftly down Fourth Avenue. Trucks, motors, trolleys, crowded the street; a wind blew dust along the pavement in black whirlpools. Far above him he could see among the roof tops the gentle blue of April sky, and thin, white clouds. He walked through gloom, among the shadows of the deep street bottoms; the wind against his face was stale and dusty. He held his head up to watch the sky and his thoughts were of Cambridge, the low, level country, with the wide sweep of the heaven above, Cambridge, the growing grass and the aged trees in leaf again, the cottages and gardens, the orchards and the south wind and lilacs. Cambridge, and the slow drift of men's voices on Holyoke Street. . . .

On his desk was a letter from Frank.

"All afternoon," he wrote, "I have been in the rooms of a serious group of Carverians, and all afternoon they did nothing but expound Carver to me and to each other, with infinite logic and intelligence. And it was all very stupid and very earnest and very sad.

"Why must men be always so intensely lopsided? Why is it our inveterate fate to grasp at one string, and follow that blindly, wilfully, to its extreme? I, for one, believe that there is no one answer to satisfy everything. For every labor trouble we need a different answer. I watch the

lives of these people all around me, and I hear their firm explanations. How very much larger their lives are than what they say of them!

"And you . . . how goes your little world in the slums? I have been thinking of you these blue and gold days. Lilacs are out; I have been for long walks in Waverly. But your house on Holyoke has fallen into stranger hands. I passed there yesterday; there were two windows broken, and Franklin told me very sadly that everyone in the house had been gorgeously drunk the night before. As I stood there, there was a bloody racket in my old room, and a book came flying out of the window. Resurgent youth . . . Cambridge grows older and older.

"Good old Don. He has written me a long brief on polygamy. It rages here, too, among the most advanced Carverians. Carver, I fancy, dislikes the idea a lot, but he's helpless now. It is useless to argue with such folk; they talk so loudly, and they are so sure. However, it is an unimportant matter. There is always someone to be confident of disagreeable things, from Revelations to the *Cedipus*.

"My love to all of you. I wonder when I shall see you again."

Peter walked slowly through the office to where a high window faced the south, and stood there with the letter in his hand, looking down across the city. The sun had misted the south with light, had misted the low roofs stretching away to the

broad, blue river, the tugs, the thin lines of bridges, spans, towers, fading into the sunlight. White plumes of smoke drifted from the chimneys and blew across the city. To the south towered the group of skyscrapers at the end of the island, high, unbelievably high and remote, faintly luminous and dim in the sun's haze, and above them all, the slim tower of the Woolworth against the light sky. The sun beat warm through the closed window. Peter opened it and leaned out; he heard the busy humming of the city below him, the far-off jar of trucks and wagons. An idle wind blew against his face, and it seemed to him that through the odor of the wind there was a drift of spring, of water, of country, of grass and flowers, somewhere, very far away.

He took a deep breath and went back to his desk. For a day he was glad that he was in New York.

At evening he walked home, up the smooth, dark flowing of Fifth Avenue, that stretched, a line of yellow lights, before him. Past shadows of the Park he went, newly green, fragrant, beneath the cold and friendless dignity of gray stone houses, then east, across the avenues, under the clatter of the elevated, and into the slums. There was no odor now of spring, but a dreary smell of people, of rooms, of dark and dilapidated hallways. Children played and shouted shrilly through the thrumming of the streets; their voices clashed together in minor glees. A barrel organ wailed lugubriously, and chattered thin chords; before it

three little girls in dirty dresses danced childishly, and nearby another group of girls skipped a rope, reciting their monotonous dogma. At Second Avenue, pedler carts stood lined against the curb, and women bargained in high, excited voices. Through all the evening there was a wail; the slums droned and whined. The minor sound of it moved through Peter's body, filling him with an insufferable longing, a vague and restless melancholy. He wanted desperately the quiet and peace of the countryside, the friendliness of trees, the smell of earth. He wanted to be away from people. He wanted to be with Joan alone, to be with her and only the night about them, to be with her anywhere, anywhere at all away from voices, from eternal close walls and lamplight, from the smother of the city that pressed on him from every side. He wanted to be in Cambridge again, through slow and unpeopled streets, the wide, serene evening . . . he wanted . . . he did not know what he wanted, but he wanted it intensely.

Joan came behind him and laid her arm about his shoulders. With a sudden cry he turned and drew her down upon him awkwardly and kissed her and kissed her. Holding her there, he buried his face insatiably in the bit of lace at her breast; instinctively she struggled to regain her feet, and her hair loosened and fell about his face. He let her go, and turned away, biting his lip. She stood before him; her hand fluttered a moment toward him, but he was not looking at her; it dropped to

her side again. She stood irresolute, and as he did not turn, walked at last to the bedroom, rearranging her hair with both hands, her loose sleeves falling away from her slender, delicately moulded arms as she stood before the mirror, twisting her russet hair high on her head. She was breathing a bit unevenly, and smiling, but Peter sat with flaming cheeks and a beating heart, waiting for her voice to class him definitely with Eddie.

As the evenings in May grew warmer and more plaintive, Peter and Joan found their three little rooms growing smaller and smaller, the stove, which always seemed big in the tiny kitchen, growing larger and larger. It was jolly to leave the tenement and the stove and the dishes, and wander off upon minor adventures to the stoves and dishes of undiscovered restaurants. Once they dined uptown in a lordly fashion, but that was too expensive, even for Peter's exceeding wealth, and thereafter they sought out little places downtown. They walked together through the Italian section, and ate in old, old houses, tumbled, painted in crude, dull colors, where clandestine and sleepy quiet brooded, and long, thin crusts stood up in glasses upon the tables, to crunch and crackle in their mouths. They wandered idly through the murmurous Ghetto, past the small, gloomy shops crowded one upon the other, where it seemed as though everything in the world were for sale; past long blocks of pedlers' carts piled high with fruits and vegetables, candies, linens

and laces. They took supper in a dingy Hebrew dining room, and ate a vast amount of remarkably good bread and drank sparingly of some terrible coffee. There was almost a scene because Peter refused to tell the slow and melancholy waiter why he had not finished all his coffee. And they ate at the famous restaurants of the Village, north, south, and west of Washington Square.

Peter was happier rambling so with Joan than he had been all spring. It was almost as though he had won back the untroubled companionship of the year before in those dark streets, among those dusky alleys, as though he wanted, after all, no more than to be with her, to touch her arm, her hand as they walked, to whisper to her of this and that, and smile very knowingly at her across the table. There was something articulate in adventuring so, in guarding her from all sorts of imaginary dangers and terrors, in demanding attention for her from waiters, in fussing tremendously about her coat and her rubbers and the chair she sat on. At any rate, it was a good deal more expressive than washing dishes and peeling a carrot, no matter how he hustled about the dishes or fussed with the carrot.

They took Don and Helen to Polly's, off Washington Square, riding down Fifth Avenue, through the evening on the top of a bus, high above people walking on the streets, peering down upon the motors that swarmed slowly up and down about them. As they came out of the shopping district

the traffic thinned away until of a sudden below Twenty-third Street they were riding down a silent and deserted avenue between empty buildings. Across the glitter of Fourteenth they went, a pleasant wind on their faces, past old brownstone houses, a rambling church, past the age old serenity of the Brevoort, out of another land entirely, another city, under the white arch and into the faint fragrance of trees in the Square.

They walked through the empty rooms of Polly's and out to the back, and down a stairs to the canvas-roofed yard. There, under bright yellow lights, sat the group of Greenwich Village bohemians who made Polly's their rendezvous. The first impression was one of laughter, of women's eyes staring, of colored tam o' shanters and smocks, and general confugalty, a clatter of dishes, a chiming of voices. Peter, striving to look very bold and bohemian and unconcerned, picked out a table, and the four of them sat down and stared around them.

At first it was hard to distinguish anything, or do very much more than whirl giddily about in the atmosphere and think of Paris and Mimi and Rudolphe and Louise and Little Billee. But after a bit things stood out through the laughter and the voices and the clatter, women's faces, young and excitable, bobbed hair, colored smocks, mischievous faces. Everyone talked very loudly and eagerly, save a quiet few who went seriously about

their eating. Peter looked in vain among the men for long hair, or even a beard; they seemed to be rather slim, merry youngsters, with here and there a blunt, dark New Yorker, and here and there a stalwart viking, probably from Harvard. They all had an air of rhapsody about them, as though they might break forth into something at any moment, and yet no one of them looked to be absorbed in any great work, or, indeed, to be much preoccupied with work at all, save those few folk intent upon their eating. But they were all young, remarkably young; there wasn't a respectably elderly person in Polly's, and although Peter recognized the folly of it, he could not help dreaming himself in Paris.

Having been there before, he called for Mike in a loud voice, and presently that gentleman appeared flying along with a crowded tray, abrupt and bristly. To him Peter ordered and settled back in his seat again.

Watching these bohemian folk more carefully, he made discoveries. For one thing, they looked a bit fagged, and once or twice he thought he caught them off their guard, and then they seemed pathetically uncertain, as though they had stopped a moment to ask what it was all about. But before they even formulated their question, an eddy of laughter, or some intense debate would snatch them up again and whirl them along.

And he discovered that the women were not as pretty as they had seemed before. He looked at

Joan; she was like a rare and delicate flower in a cluster of wild weed, and his heart leaped and capered and sang that she should be so splendid. She found Peter looking at her so eagerly that she blushed and laughed and blushed again and started talking to Don very fast. But Peter came galloping out of Paris at a great rate.

A humorously melancholy chap plucked at a painted ukelele he had made from a cigar box, and sang a song about Greenwich Village in an uncertain voice, a song, however, that everyone seemed to know, for they all laughed together at the appropriate parts. The few intent folk went seriously on with their meals and Mike came and went explosively.

"This fascinates me," Helen said to Peter in a low voice. "Do you think that all these women have studios and . . . and go in for free love, and all that sort of thing?"

"Any old room is a studio in bohemia," Peter said, "and as for the rest . . . I can't say. But I suppose so."

He looked at Helen curiously. Her eyes were shining, and her cheeks were pink; Peter frowned.

"They rather believe in polygamy . . . without children," he said, and smiled to see Helen grow confused.

"Careful, old Helen," he said privately to himself.

"Do you think they're all artists?" she whispered.

"No. But they all express themselves, no doubt. They wrestle around with their emotions, and it keeps them fit."

"Still," Helen said slowly, "it's rather fine to . . . just defy things, and live your own life . . . and forget the things you think are wrong."

Peter rushed impetuously against her. "You're mixing up these folk with the Masses group," he cried. "These people aren't fighting, Helen. They're just out of the world, having a high old time."

"Well, then the Masses group . . ."

"Old lady," Peter said seriously, "anarchists are just as passionately opposed to injustice as we are."

"Peter," Helen said, "I think you're wrong about artist folk. Perhaps not this kind, but the real, long-haired men in cotton shirts. All their happiness is in the life they live. In being poor and free."

Peter smiled and patted her hand. "Happiness doesn't mean freedom, dear," he said with a fine benevolence.

"But passion . . ." Helen began.

"Passion is very popular these days," Don said suddenly from his end of the table.

Peter sat silent, biting his lip.

They walked across the Square together in the warm night, among a crowd of people, mothers and babies from the slums, youths and maidens, shapeless and noisy. To the south the city

stretched to the sea; east and west the wide rivers ran closer and closer. Far down town rising among the sleeping buildings, gleamed the red light of the Woolworth, above the empty, cavernous streets. To the east and west lay the slums, the bitterest slums, the slums of darkest and most barbarous fable, teeming with dangerous, alien folk, with crude gaiety and swift tragedy. Yet here in the Square was an insistent dignity and sobriety; the old houses on Eighth Street stood sternly facing the oncoming tenements as the city moved to the north. Down these side streets lived romance; here art lived, nay, whatever of art it was, here it lived gaily and viciously, and starved and made merry in garrets. Beyond brooded the people, lashed and forgotten. The nearness of life in this Square beat in upon Peter; it was almost a threshold to reality. It seemed to him that all about him life was real, uncompromising, urgent and swift, light among students, tragic among paupers. Here was no theorizing, no patience, no slow unfolding of beliefs. Each day was life, to be fought for and grasped, torn and glutted.

The wind of New York at night blew in his face from the south. It was a wind of the sea, and yet no wind of the open sea, as Boston had been, but rather of the dark tide among wharves and ships, the odor of the swift, seaward rivers. He held Joan's arm close in his as he walked, and happiness swung into his stride.

"Only," he said to her, "my longing for people . . . to know them . . . to be a part of their lives, to understand their lives—goes so far deeper in me than my experience . . . and it haunts me. For that reason I wish I had experienced widely . . . had tasted all manner of things . . . Those folk we left . . . what do I know of them? What part of their lives have I lived?"

"I know," said Joan.

They walked together silently, closer to each other than they had ever been.

"I remember," Peter said at last, "how impatient I was at the end of my sophomore year because I wasn't glorious. And David, too . . . he had no patience left him. We have always been impatient to be glorious, thinking to find it around the next corner . . . I wonder if I'll ever look back on this year, Joan, and say that."

"I hope so, Peter."

"Yes . . . it would be rather unfortunate, really to be glorious, dear, and to go around corners without caring!"

At the Park Don and Helen left them, and they walked on together, talking of Cambridge days, recalling and criticising, judging the worth of old things. It was almost as though they were alone again, the streets were so quiet, and they talked in half whispers. They came into their little tenement, out of the world, with a strange sense of intimacy, of being home, of being together, always

and always together. Peter took Joan's face in his hands and kissed her, and his heart was like the lapping of water at full tide.

Yet once at home silence overtook them both; they were ill at ease, and could do no more than smile at one another half timidly, half vaguely. They wandered restlessly through the tiny rooms, arranging trifles; they could find nothing to say, and yet each wanted to speak.

"It must be late," Joan said at last.

They made themselves ready for bed quickly, Peter in his den, Joan in her room. His heart now was unusually still, his movements detached and methodical. Through his mind ran the three ascending octaves of the *Verklärung*, in stilly music. Somehow it seemed as though the night were of vast importance, but why it should be he did not know. He switched out the light and went across the kitchen into the bedroom, and climbed into his bed. He bent above Joan.

"Good night, dear," he said. Her arms went up about his neck and drew his face down to hers.

Suddenly terror seized hold of him, and he half struggled away from her, but her slim arms crept closer about his neck.

"Peter," she murmured.

His heart began to beat heavily; he felt curiously weak, half sick. He took a deep, sighing breath, and stooped toward her.

The mighty deeps of tenderness stirred and lifted, eddied and broke, rushed roaring and surg-

ing over him, engulfing him, drowning him, swept on irresistibly, up, up, in a tremendous tide, shattering and rending, swept him helpless, struggling, on the very crest of the wave. . . . Ah, but he was swept with it, the tide rose behind him. And then of a sudden he was the tide, he was that mighty power, he was that triumphant tenderness himself, he, Peter Kindred, that thunderous music, that deep, deep crying . . .

All night he held her very gently, sleeping.

The next day the sun, streaming on her face, woke her to a tremendous and amazing din.

"Peter," she cried, "my dear . . ."

Peter, in the bathroom, through a great splashing of cold water, was singing, singing as though to split his throat.

CHAPTER XII

DON was shut away in his room before his examinations, with his books and his notes, coming out only for meals, for references at the library and a few minutes in the air before supper. Helen, grown impatient of Gary work, had plunged into some books on biology, and seemed to be filling her mind with formulæ. During the early spring she had met with some radical folk, feminists and the like, and she took to spending more and more time with one or another of them, discussing everything and anything that seemed unfair, and dealing life some mortal whacks. It was a case of worm turning; she forgot herself, championing the poor, the underpaid laborer, the over-used mother, and with enthusiasm for the cause of woman's independence, she lost, to a great degree, her own dependence. She grew a bit grim and relentless, and upon more than one occasion startled her mother and father into silence, a feat that pleased her immensely.

But Peter and Joan did not care for Helen's

feminists. To Joan's mind they were too bitter, too excited, too eager, and to Peter it was a case of the extremist again, a creature he viewed with a deal of suspicion, a creature who would build up the whole house by hitting one nail a terrible blow and letting the other nails be. But it seemed to Peter that he was always tearing his clothes on a great many nails and that the house would be no less ramshackle if one were driven in firmly. And there, I fancy, we have Peter finally a conservative, after a fashion, and no more entirely right than Helen, save that he would be glad to see the nail driven in, if it could be done a little less furiously.

But life at that time was too happy for Peter to trouble himself with wrongs, and for a while he fell in love with the city, even with the insolent and windy walls towering above him, with the narrow vistas of sky, the river, the bridges soaring across to the east, and the deep, dusty streets. It was late May in New York, when every wind from the south and the west brought its fugitive fragrance to drift above the streets and into open windows, when evening was slow and gradual and late, and morning was blue and gold and freshly washed. Beyond the city the counties were blossoming in daisies, in roses, and lilacs. In the office windows were open, and inquisitive winds came in to peek about and rustle papers and blow lightly across cheeks. Along the avenues the sun shone on straw hats and men

walked without coats, and at noontime it was pleasant just to wander up and down in the warming sun and the wind and not to eat at all.

Edith was to be married and the Kindred household hummed like a hive. There were fittings for Edith, there were consultations among the family, there were dinners and shopping expeditions, unending bustle and talk, furniture to be decided upon and shopped for, curtains to be made, sewing to be done. Through it all, Peter's mother moved radiantly worried, rushed, breathless and excited. Edith, whirled from her feet, performed prodigies of buying, and Eddie, quietly dizzy, came to have lunch with Peter. He was inclined to play the braggart still, but Peter found it childish and amusing, and warmed to an undertone of bewilderment and hope and a touch of fright that Eddie could not entirely conceal.

"You know," he said to Peter, "what you did wasn't as foolish as it sounds. It must be sort of nice just to go off . . . Say," he appealed to Peter wistfully, "do you think we're going to be friends? You know I'm not strong on this anarchist stuff . . . It's all right, I guess," he said hastily, "but it's not in my line. I haven't had the time to take it in. . . . Don't you think we'll sort of hit it off all right, though?"

"I certainly do," Peter said gravely.

The rehearsal for the wedding went off gaily, the city slept—save Eddie—and woke again, and it was Edith's wedding day. In the vestry of a

church, Peter and his father stood and stared at each other, and Peter was reminded of the day he had brought Joan home, and they had stared at each other just so wide-eyed and puzzled. He thought his father would always be just so puzzled at him, puzzled to know whether Peter were such a man as he, timid lest Peter should peer into him and find him ridiculous, after all, and by finding him so, settle the matter definitely for him, this matter which he did not quite want settled. So he rocked up and down on the balls of his feet, and beat one fist into the palm of his hand behind him, made noises in his throat, and stared at Peter. Peter had grown old enough rather to enjoy watching him.

"I suppose mother and Edith have been dressing all day," he said.

"Eh?" said his father, stopping his rocking more or less in mid air, "oh . . . Hmn . . . Yes, yes, all day. Hmn." And then, after a silence, he went on rocking again.

Guests came; the church grew murmurous with people; the minister took his place looking very important and reverend; Eddie appeared, white-faced and somehow courageous. An organ pealed and shook and thundered through the dusk of the nave, and Edith came slowly, dim white, carrying flowers, tremendously unlike the Edith Peter had known, and behind her his mother. A hush sighed through the church, and in the silence intoned the marriage service; the rich colors of the figured

windows glowed in the gloom and from some high window stole downward a pale fall of dusty sunlight. His mother wept audibly, and other people wept, and the voices of Eddie and his sister trembled and drifted before the deep, pealing questions. In Peter's throat a lump grew and grew, a blessed illogical lump, for no reason at all, save that here, somehow in this unholy and inquisitive gathering, life had been touched with majesty and beauty, had been expressed poignantly and tenderly, in all its pathos, its hopefulness, its loveliness and courage.

The organ shook a passion of chords through the shadow, and it was over. Folk crowded about the couple with kisses and laughter and talk, and in their midst Peter caught a glimpse of his mother, her face shining radiantly through her forgotten tears.

Edith and her husband were gone, and the folk drifted away. The vestry room was still, and through the empty quiet of the church the organist played idly, watching the dancing dust across the thin falling of sunlight.

That night his mother and father sat together alone in their familiar place. The rooms that had belonged to Peter and to Edith ever since they were old enough to have rooms of their own, were empty and dark. The two old people sat together soberly, doing nothing, staring out before them through the lamplight to the slow and even years ahead, old age and growing quietness and

empty rooms. They had climbed a long hill; they had breasted the top; the road led down again into ultimate darkness. They would be always coming home now to empty rooms and quietness. The excitement had worn itself away, the woman was tired; of all the company, of all the stress and planning, the talk and laughter, the momentary splendor, there was nothing left save gossip, and two old people. Edith in a train hurrying to the southland, and Peter in a tenement across the city . . . other roads, other faiths, other names. In the morning, the man thought, he would be going to the office, and mornings after and mornings after that, and then he would be sitting in the same chair a while, and finally, an end. Haply, he mused, there would be children, and he would be a grandfather, and told, like as not, to mind his business.

And so they sat forlorn, facing the stillness. In another room the housegirl made a faint stir as she moved about, and through the open window the wind brought the dull and heavy odor of the city, the faint hum and undertone of the streets. The man roused himself with a start at last and looked at his wife. Her hands lay folded in her lap, her face was lined and weary. He hustled to his feet.

"Well, mother," he said uncertainly, "shall we open a little wine . . . for the occasion . . . a little toast to the children, all by ourselves? . . ."

She smiled at him and roused herself. To the

south and to the east, far off, the names of her two children were whispered through the darkness and were answered, nor was there, south or east, a thought of these two old folk who held their glasses of red wine to the light, and turning toward each other clinked them together bravely, and wished their children well.

“Edith,” they said, and then, “Peter.”

Don, coming doggedly through the examinations, took rooms in town over the summer, and continued his apprenticeship in a friendly law office on Wall Street. It was unnecessary to his degree, but as he admitted to Helen, he wanted to be in the east that summer, and rather dreaded the thought of going back to his family. With Don in the city, Helen flatly refused to budge, and since she would not go with her family either to the seashore or to the mountains or, indeed, anywhere at all, they flounced angrily off and left her in charge of the big house, which she promptly filled full with all manner of radicals, and held committee meetings on birth control in the shrouded parlor. When the parlor maid threatened to leave at that, she told her she could damn well leave if she wanted to, and that so shocked the parlor maid that she stayed out of spite. Joan was inclined to be a bit upset about the whole affair, and wished that Helen were spending her summer in the country, or that Don had gone home. But Helen took to striding about the city

in low-heeled shoes, and picking up acquaintances among charwomen and bootblacks.

With Helen a Radical enthusiast, her old shyness before Don swung about completely into an unusual boldness, and matter-of-factness. For one thing, she insisted on having polygamy out with him, and after an excessively stormy hour or so, professed herself suddenly converted to the logic of it. Thereafter she rather swept Don off his feet with the enthusiasm she put into it . . . the theory of it, at any rate . . . and Peter finally very sternly refused to discuss the matter at all, and would do no more than shake his head sorrowfully at mention of it and cover his ears with the palms of his hands. Then Don would begin to shout, and Peter would open his mouth as wide as he could, and howl tremendously, until Don was too out of breath to do more than grunt exactly like an infuriated wild boar; through the din Helen always managed to find some particularly heartless and sexless thing to say, with a convincing air of really believing it. Finally Don and Peter managed to break a tea cup between them, and Joan, out of patience, stood them both in a corner for five minutes, and told Helen to behave herself.

On a June morning Joan awoke early and complained of nausea. She was better after her breakfast coffee, but the following day she remained thoughtfully at home, and Peter, in his office, tortured himself with terrible imaginings

and swore Joan should see a doctor the very moment he came home, and if one doctor were not enough, why then all the doctors in the city, and that, besides, he was a fool and a chump to let her eat in all those helter skelter restaurants. She was curiously silent when he came home at last, a bit reserved and almost self-conscious, and watched Peter with a look half troubled and half smiling.

"Joan," said Peter firmly, "I'm going to telephone a doctor."

She laughed at that, and came over to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

"I've been to see a doctor, dear," she said. Her hand was unsteady on his shoulder, and Peter grew frightened. He sprang up.

"What . . . what's the matter?" he stammered.

"I'm going to have a baby," she said with a half frightened catch in her voice.

The blood flowed out of Peter's body, his insides melted away, and he was left a mere numb intellect staring and staring. Finally he wet his lips and gulped.

"Gee," he said hoarsely.

Hearing and movement swam back to him; he walked across to the table and took up a book and put it down again. Then, seemingly, he remembered Joan, and put his arm clumsily around her shoulders. Then he sat down in a chair and stared at her, and then he got up, and then he sat down

again. All the words in the world had suddenly dashed together in a great white ball, and were spinning around madly, while he watched nearby and waited for a word or two to come flying out. It seemed as though the only word left outside the whirling was Gee, and so he repeated that again, and waited for another word to come. Finally, one came.

"Jinks," he said.

All that evening he smiled at Joan with the helpless, pathetic smile of an utter idiot.

It was Helen who told the news to Don.

"Don, old man," she cried to him breathlessly, "we're going to have a baby!"

"Helen!" Don cried, and his heart stopped beating.

"Joan, you silly thing," she said.

They capered about, holding each other's hands like children.

"Isn't it perfectly great?" she said.

"Aren't we to have a party?" Don asked at last.

"We two?"

"Of course not. Don't you remember that Peter promised . . ."

"Hush, hush . . . Why, Peter grows absolutely pale at the very mention of it."

Joan insisted upon continuing her office work for a while, at any rate; they would need all the money they could save, she said, and Peter, per-

force, agreed with her, although unwillingly. Yet he, in turn, insisted that she rest at evening, and so he cooked the supper, clumsily enough, and washed the dishes, and broke a few, and burned himself upon one occasion. and scalded himself upon another.

June wilted away into heat and the July sun blazed down on the city, searching out the slums with sullen fury. The wind dropped away and the drone of spring gave place to a sort of breathlessness, a gloomy and uneasy quietness, stirred with faint muttering. Peter was not unused to the city in summer, and yet there was a hopelessness about it in the slums, a sort of personal unfriendliness, a closeness and intolerable intimacy with the heat, as though the sun was just a bit nearer, the air a bit stiller and stickier and heavier. The pavements, burning in the sun all day, kept the city hot through the night; in the early morning there was a little wind, but it died away long before noon. With no wind to stir them, the slums were like an uncleaned pool, odors drifted idly in the streets, close and sour odors, and clung to the tenements. During the day the avenues were deserted; at nightfall, women in dragged blouses, and soiled wrappers, with untidy hair, leaned from their windows and called down to the streets. Babies played at the windows and grew dirty; men in coarse undershirts, with bare necks and bare arms sat on the steps of the tenements and loitered in the damp doorways. In the gutters

children played their monotonous games; gangs of ragged muckers wandered about idly and the ululation of their shouting echoed and reëchoed through the streets. . . .

“Weeallee, weeallee . . .”

From Second Avenue came the dull grumble and thunder of the elevated, and beyond Third lay the city silent to the Park, it seemed, with houses shuttered and boarded up, and no wind even to stir the dust in the streets. Only in the slums the people sprawled and waited, held their breath, and on a few window sills red geraniums drooped and withered.

It took the courage out of Joan. Her face grew white and peaked, her slender hands more thin, almost transparent, her lithe movements slower and slower. She made no complaint, and if Peter were watching her, she smiled. Alone, sometimes, she cried; she did not know why, but she could not help herself. For a while, in the mornings, she was insufferably nauseated, and went to her work faint and dizzy. She hid her trouble religiously from Peter, who had no inkling of it; he thought her very brave, however, seeing how tired she was; she could not conceal that. But she would not give up her office work.

“Not yet, Peter,” she said. “We shall need every littlest penny.”

Peter plunged into his work with all the power of his mind and body. He was aroused to battle for himself as he had never been, fired with the

realization of his manhood, his fatherhood. Belief, theory, intolerance were forgotten, he grasped his pencil like a club.

"It's up to me," Peter said.

"It may not be Carver to do another man's boasting for him," he added, "but I've little time now to bother with that."

So Peter went patiently and energetically to work and made friends in the office. It wasn't hard to swing into the stride of things; it was good to be a unit in some brisk energy, to claim companionship with men in an effort. With only the need of doing well to worry him, things changed about somewhat, and seemed to be of different stuff.

"After all, dear," he said to Joan, "we stand as a sort of interpreter. That's rough, of course, but generally . . . that is, we find out what a chap wants to say, or what he ought to want to say, and then we take it to the sort of people he ought to say it to, and put it so that they can understand it. It's not so bad, you know, from that point of view."

A few men spoke of Peter Kindred, linked him up casually with the Hammond Watch and the remembered jellies; in August he was invited to take charge of the copy department on a small magazine.

He hurried home to Joan with the news, and tumbled up the steps.

"Joan, old lady, what do you think? . . ."

Joan, however, was of the opinion that he'd find a wider field in the agency, and thought it would be better to stay there for a time, at any rate, get deeper into the matter, and watch for bigger things. Still it was significant and unexpectedly pleasant to be asked to take charge of anything, and quite worthy of the little spree that Peter suggested and Joan, although she had no taste for it, had not the heart to refuse.

"Jimminy," Peter said. "I'd like to get you out of the slums, dear."

"Well . . . yes," Joan said.

"You see," Peter began timidly, "I thought that perhaps if I said yes to that offer . . ."

"No, dear," Joan said decidedly, "we must look ahead, you know . . . things will be all right."

"Well . . . surely next year . . . somehow. The country . . . or something."

"I hardly know. There's coal, and . . . all sorts of things. But the country would be splendid for . . . little Peter."

Little Peter!

Why, of course. He'd have to be considered from then on, and if the country would be splendid for him, that was important. Peter laughed quietly; he had been thinking only of Joan and of himself, and all that time there were three to be considered . . . a family! As he laughed his life grew and grew, sounded depths, reached out beyond frontiers, brimmed full of tenderness and

happiness. What a tremendous big family little Peter made!

At noon they walked together in Madison Square, and sat on a shaded bench. They did not like the Square but there was no other place to go, and Joan was too tired just to walk up and down. The walks were crowded with paupers, the fountains played and old men stood staring at the rhythmic rise and fall of the water; they watched it dumbly and helplessly, old men with bent knees and baggy trousers and watery eyes. On the benches sat ragged men, unshaven and remarkably dirty, with tumbled brown socks hanging over their shoes. Some read old newspapers, some leaned back and slept and snored, many just sat. Here and there the bleared wreck of a woman, with wild, unkempt hair and untied shoes, sunned herself and mumbled. Peter hated these people, hated these wrecks more than he had hated the slums, more than he had ever hated anything all his life long. Indeed, these were a vastly different matter from the slums; here was no force, no evil, no unrest, but here was utter, utter defeat, man come to infinitely less than nothing, like a drifting and horrible decay.

Men walked swiftly across the Square, talking and gesturing, young men with unpleasant faces, dark, blunted, bepowdered little stenographers, factory girls, in pairs and groups. Motors whined by up and down Fifth Avenue, busses jarred and bumped over the cobblestones of Twenty-third

Street. Across the Square, beneath the high, sunny tower of the Metropolitan, perspiring men in shirt sleeves stood upon soap boxes, tossing about above the sea of faces around them, shouting and gesturing, calling for socialism, calling for the brotherhood of man, calling for God and religion and what not besides, working themselves into a veritable frenzy, their voices hoarse, their faces dripping wet, their hair blowing about. They had been bitten by a Cause . . . below them faces looked up passively; there was nothing else to do; and it was pleasant to stand in the sun and listen idly to a hoarse shouting. Across from them a man put up a stand and started to sharpen a knife; after a bit he cut up some wood, and hacked at a bar of lead, and sharpened the knife again, repeating a nasal formula as he labored. A messenger boy stopped and watched him, a crowd drifted about him slowly, and stood waiting. . . . For what? For nothing at all. Just waiting.

"If I could write about the slums," Peter said, "I should want to draw them just that way, standing about, together, dully, waiting. And then working like trojans. And then standing about again, and waiting."

"Why don't you, dear?" Joan said.

"That would be a rummy go, wouldn't it? I might . . . some day when I have my own den . . . and everything."

"Peter," Joan said suddenly, "do you know that milk has gone up a penny?"

"Yes," Peter said, "I know. A dairymen's league, or something. Still . . ."

"But Peter," Joan said, "what of the slum babies?"

He smiled. "I think," he murmured, "you'd write a better book than I, old lady."

Joan sighed. "We'll have to think of all that, too, Peter," she said.

He was silent for a time, watching the sky above the buildings to the south.

"Do you know," he said at last, "I'll rather want him to live on the gold coast . . . somewhere near Holyoke Street."

The wonder of it wasn't that he was going to have a baby and be its father, but that he was going to have Joan's baby and that Joan would be its mother and hold it in her arms and make little sounds at it. This was the remarkable part of the whole matter, that his love for her had come to something real, as real as he was himself, something he could touch and watch and hug if he wanted to, when no one was looking . . . and after all, this strange little creature would be neither more nor less than his love for Joan caught, condensed, patted and moulded into shape . . . and he could play little piggee with its toes . . . he grew riotously and happily confused, and the baby kept changing like a Wonderland baby from a formless expression of his love for his wife to a creature with toes to be loved for themselves, and then back again. But out of it all

came one thing clear, even a deeper tenderness for Joan, a greater humility, a wider courage. Touched with fatherhood, his life crowded forward like a swift ship under a full spread of sail. Men were other ships to be gaily saluted; he walked with a sort of humorous pride, and made decisions about things with the satisfied solemnity of an old man.

And yet he planned very little, for that would have clouded the serene breathlessness of waiting.

In September Joan's strength gave out, and Peter, given a fortnight for himself, took her north to her parents at Marblehead, to let the green ocean, foaming against the rocks, the clear sky and the bright wind struggle and blow against her listlessness. She sat out all day long under a tree, white and tired, and Peter read to her, and old friends hurried to see her, and blood came swinging back to her cheeks again slowly.

They were fortunately gone, for a tidal wave of heat piled up in the west and broke itself upon New York; horses fell in the streets, and in the slums people rotted and died and babies wailed incessantly. Milk went up another penny, and there was talk of a shortage; hollow-eyed women gathered about the milk carts dumbly, holding their babies.

After a week of it, Helen called up Don.

"Don," she said, "if I don't get away from these streets, to-night, I shall die."

"There are boats and things," Don said.

"Will you go?"

"Where?"

"On a boat, any boat—to Coney Island."

"Oh, Lord," Don moaned.

"Will you go?"

"To Coney Island?"

"If you don't, I'll go alone, and have an adventure."

"I'll go," said Don hastily.

They rattled down to the Battery on the elevated, peering below them at empty black streets, in the warehouse district, rushing along between blank walls, shuttered windows, secret and gloomy places beyond the reach of the world. At the Battery they stood at the edge of the city, the mass of towers rising beyond them, the sonorous cañons of the avenues, the huddled houses, the echoing streets at their back. Above their heads the elevated shrilled around a curve to where, spread out behind them, lay the city, sounding with many voices under the night. Here, at the edge, was the salt air of the sea; the moonlight lay dim across the bay; the red light of a distant ship burned like a jewel on the water, and a lighted ferry moved in myriad tiny squares of gold steadily far out from shore. From the Narrows came blowing faintly the sound of a fog horn.

They bought their tickets and climbed up the dusty, wooden stairs of the wharf, to find themselves in a smother of people. It was hot and

close under the roof; the air was lifeless. Don fanned himself with his hat, and Helen went exploring. She came back to him finally, and tugged at his arm.

"Don," she said, "I want some popcorn and some peanuts."

The boat swung in against the dock, the people huddled closer together, the gates were pulled open and the crowd surged through. Beyond the gates, the two of them came clear of folk, and filled their lungs with air again. Then Helen ran lightly down the steps, and up through the boat to the top deck, Don hurrying along after her.

They found a place in the middle of the ship, a raised deck with room enough for them to sit there. A bell tinkled clearly, below them the engines thrummed, the paddle wheels smashed at the water, the ship shuddered; above them a steel piston moved up and down in the darkness; the ship gained headway; the land fell away, the towers of the city grew smaller and smaller, a dark, shadowy mass against the paler night, spun out in occasional high pin points of yellow light, and far off, now, through the moonlight, the solitary red beacon of the Woolworth in the sky.

Don looked about him at the crowded deck. Couples sat with their arms about each other, and kissed each other, the women half defiantly ashamed, the men rowdily unaware of their neighbors. From below drifted a dance tune, the thin wail of a violin, the jingle of a piano. The ship

moved swiftly and steadily; little by little in the eyes of men and women other folk were lost, and lovers saw only each other, the night, the blue-gray moonlight on the water, the wide sky overhead, heard only their own whispers and the swish of water under the boat. The moonlight touched their faces, and rippled in shadows across the looming funnels of the ship; the wind blew steadily from the sea, and fluttered in the folds of dresses. Dark hulks of anchored ships drifted by, a red lantern burning, and a green lantern, lazily rising to the slow waves of the bay. Through the Narrows they went, close to the wooded, misted shore, lanterns among trees, the yellow windows of cottages, into the wide, level stretch of water along the silent pathway of the moon. Don and Helen talked in whispers together, of Peter, of themselves, of happiness and life; a wisp of her hair blew across Don's face; close to them, a man and woman, cheek to cheek, dreamed of the ocean, of lands beyond the ocean, populated, somehow, by such as they, of friendly cities and familiar mountains, their tenement forgotten. The lights of Luna Park rose distantly along the water, nearer and nearer, and they were there.

All things were abandoned, then, but laughter and excitement, and Don and Helen, their pockets stuffed with pop corn, dragged each other about from one thing to another, shouting in the dark as their cars sped down the steep railways, whispering to each other in the Old Mill, winning no

less than two tea cups and a large woolly bear from the booths and galleries they could not pass by.

The last boat sounded near the wharf, and again they sat on the top deck among the crowds, and felt the wind blow on their faces and watched the dim smother of foam spread fainter and fainter behind them. Nearby two hatless fellows started to sing; the chorus swelled; Don sang along in a wild, discordant basso.

"Don't pickle my bones," he sang, and Helen, beside him, let her head rest timidly against his shoulder, while his eyes dreamed out over the water, and his spirit grew big with fellowship, richly and carelessly content among those people in the moonlight. But Helen, with closed eyes, felt only the beating of her own heart, and it seemed to her that she and Don were there alone, quite silent . . .

"It has been splendid, Don," she said, when they parted that night, and for a while Don stood looking at her, still holding her fingers lightly.

"It certainly has, old Helen," he said at last slowly.

Again the next evening he called for her, and they walked together up Riverside, to sit, finally, upon a mottled bench beneath a great tree, the dusky river below them, the slow-moving boats. Don laced his fingers about his knees, and they sat and talked of work and of the city.

"Imagine," Helen said, "our having a baby!"

"Shall you pinch it?" Don asked.

"No . . . you must be very careful how you pinch a baby. It's apt to give it bad habits."

"Peter writes that Joan is stronger."

"Don . . . do you think that . . . perhaps . . . anything could happen?"

Don sighed. "I don't believe she should have gone on working, Helen. But, of course . . . fish-hooks . . . it'll be all right."

They spoke of the city, of the summer.

"The milk has given out," Helen said. "The dairymen aren't satisfied . . . someone must be richer than he has any right to be . . . but no one will admit it."

"But I thought . . . from the papers . . ."

"It's not official yet. I was in Chrystie Street to-day, and then I went up to Peter's street . . . the women are frantic. But who cares? I don't know . . . I don't think anyone cares, Don, whether the poor die or not . . . if only there's no violence."

They walked down the Drive arm in arm. It was as they had always done, and yet, vaguely, Don missed something; some trifle was not as it had once been . . . and yet it was. Perhaps where Helen's head had rested so lightly . . . but Don had no inkling of it . . . if that was it.

He spent a restless three days, then, wondering what it was he so wanted to tell Helen that should make him so eager to see her again. He could think of nothing . . . The strike broke over

the city, and in the slums women wrecked milk carts and fought for milk for their babies; from the west side women poured east, wealthy and horrified, and blundered about. The companies blamed the farmers, and the farmers blamed the companies, while the people suffered and wondered and waited. . . .

For three days Helen lived in the slums from morning till night, finding milk somehow for babies, begging it, fighting for it, and stealing it, and during those days Don could not see her at all nor even discover her to talk to. After a day of overwhelming silence he was uneasy and thereafter restlessness grew swiftly on him, and this thing he so wanted to tell her, swelled in him dumbly and bit at him with its importance, drove work out of his head, filled his body with crying rebellion, until at last, at noon of the fourth day, he walked the streets of the lower city in such a gnawing fever of impatience that it seemed almost as though his body would burst with a horrible bang and scatter him into a thousand pieces. And yet he had formulated nothing . . . he trudged in the shadow of the street bottom, cursing the high buildings that sneered down at him so insolently, grumbling at the summer, hating the hurrying people who moved in his path. He came back to his office with his lunch untasted, hot, sullen, insubordinate. There was a telephone number on his desk. He pulled off his coat and pulled the telephone to him angrily.

"You may get me that number," he said to the girl.

He waited without thought, brooding, drifting with the impatient tide of his body.

"Hello."

Was he Mr. Don Mark? Good. The Jefferson Market Court speaking . . . Magistrate O'Reilly's clerk . . . a woman there . . . one Helen Graff . . . or Goff . . . charged . . . disseminating birth control literature . . . stealing milk . . . assaulting an officer . . . bail . . .

Three minutes later a hatless, coatless, murderous, blond young man came charging through the swinging doors of a court room like an angry bull, and was promptly fined for contempt. . . .

The Kindreds came down from Marblehead, a bit tanned, and Joan was her old self again, or seemed to be, although she rested a good deal, and her face and hands were very thin. But Peter came down in love with the sea, and more than ever in love with New England; it touched Helen to see how wistfully Joan looked at Peter when she thought herself unseen, and how Peter bustled about her and took care of her. Those days of rest in the north after their community of struggle, had wrought and linked them together, as though there, in a meadow above the sea, they had fallen in love with each other all over again. And Helen was happy, too, and quiet. She whispered it to Joan.

"You glorious child," Joan cried, "are you sure?"

Helen's laugh was low and deep with content. "You didn't see his face when he saw me in court," she said, "and I was a sight for the gods . . . all beaten to pieces and muddy . . . But you mustn't tell a soul, because he's only finding it out for himself now, the dear, funny old thing."

Peter was in town for the last days of the milk famine, and watched the long line of miserable women standing before a relief station, their starved babies hugged tight to their breasts.

"How useless it all is," he thought, "this tremendous waste of human life and human energy, for lack of a power to direct it. . . . So many wretched beings dying of too little, while those we trust to feed them are at each other's throats for more . . ."

"There would be enough for all," he said, "if only there were a power to arrange it. A power impersonal beyond selfishness, and wise beyond discontent, a power to hate . . . to make an end of greed, an end of grasping . . .

"To allot to each man his decent share . . .

"Perhaps some day all men will be forced to fight bitterly for their race life, fight side by side against the darkness, husbanding their energy, making use of all that man can devise, only to live . . . out of such a catastrophe that power may be born, grim, urgent, relentless . . . and then, at last, every man will be necessary to every other

man . . . there will be room for neither the arrogant, nor the lazy . . . there will be room for neither pride nor profit, but only for a great will to live and work and hold our grasp on the sun. . . .”

The fall winds swept through the city, booming out of the west, blowing the sky bright, burning the copper gleam of sun on the roof tops. Outdoors drifted an odor of gathering chill, of ending, of hurrying, and at night the street lamps burned clear in the city through the wind. From his office window Peter watched the clouds move across the north; beyond lay Cambridge, her halls echoing again to voices and footsteps, the drift and tang of far-off fires, the kindly Yard, the old, old houses . . . Frank . . . and youth resurgent, eager and untried, light-hearted . . . how the odor of those years came to him from the north again, above the tumbled papers of his desk!

In the den of the tenement sat Joan, sewing at tiny dresses with awkward and impetuous fingers.

The wind boomed louder and shrilled about the roofs, the sky grew grayer and grayer, the sun sank further to the south. From the north drifted a fine flurry of snow, fell lightly above the roof tops, melted.

December grew old, and for Christmas the shop windows were bravely dight in tinsel and baubles and holly and tops, and the air tingled faintly with the scent of pine trees. On the avenues, before

boxes for the poor, red-hooded and white-whiskered Santa Clauses stood shivering with cold, and rang little tinkling bells without hope. Beyond the tenements, the river was gray and wrinkled and chill. Then the river was still and deep, heavy green. And then from the sea swooped a white tumult of storm, slanting the snowflakes through the sounding streets, tearing at the cornices of roofs, smothering the city in piling white. And through the storm Peter's voice calling Boston desperately, across the desolate and wind-swept land, his telephone before him.

Silent and anxious, Joan's mother raced south through the flutter and beat of snow.

The storm spent its fury, tattered away into flying gray clouds at night, and the sun, rising golden in the east, kindled the city to a blaze of white and shone in Joan's still room at last. And Don came wearily out of the tenement, and stumbled blindly west.

Helen caught at his arm and shook him as he came in, but his face was tell-tale. She grew pale, and her eyes widened.

"The baby . . . Don?" she said faintly. He could not speak; he shook his head.

She pressed her clenched fist against her mouth, and struggled fiercely with her words.

"Joan?" she whispered at last. Don took a deep breath.

"The baby is dead. They think that Joan will come out all right . . . finally . . ."

His voice trembled. He was very tired, and his eyes filled with tears. Clumsily he put out his hands to her, and lifted his head.

"Helen," he said, and she took his hands and pressed them and bent her head above them.

In the tenement a young doctor whispered to a sober, white-capped nurse in brief, staccato sentences. At the window a woman with a drawn face stared out blindly at the street—in Joan's room was silence and the heavy odor of chloroform.

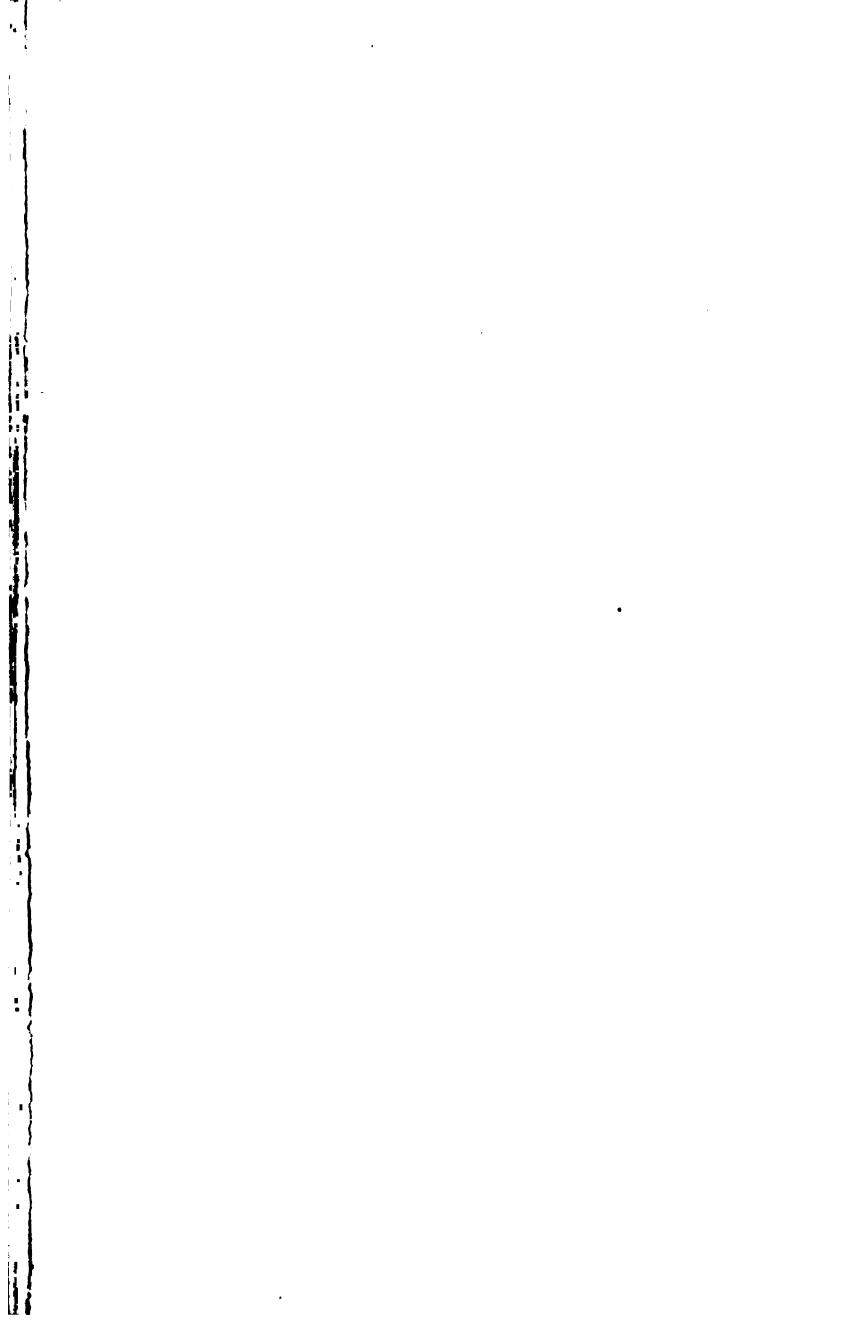
In his den Peter sat alone and bowed his head above his shivering hands.

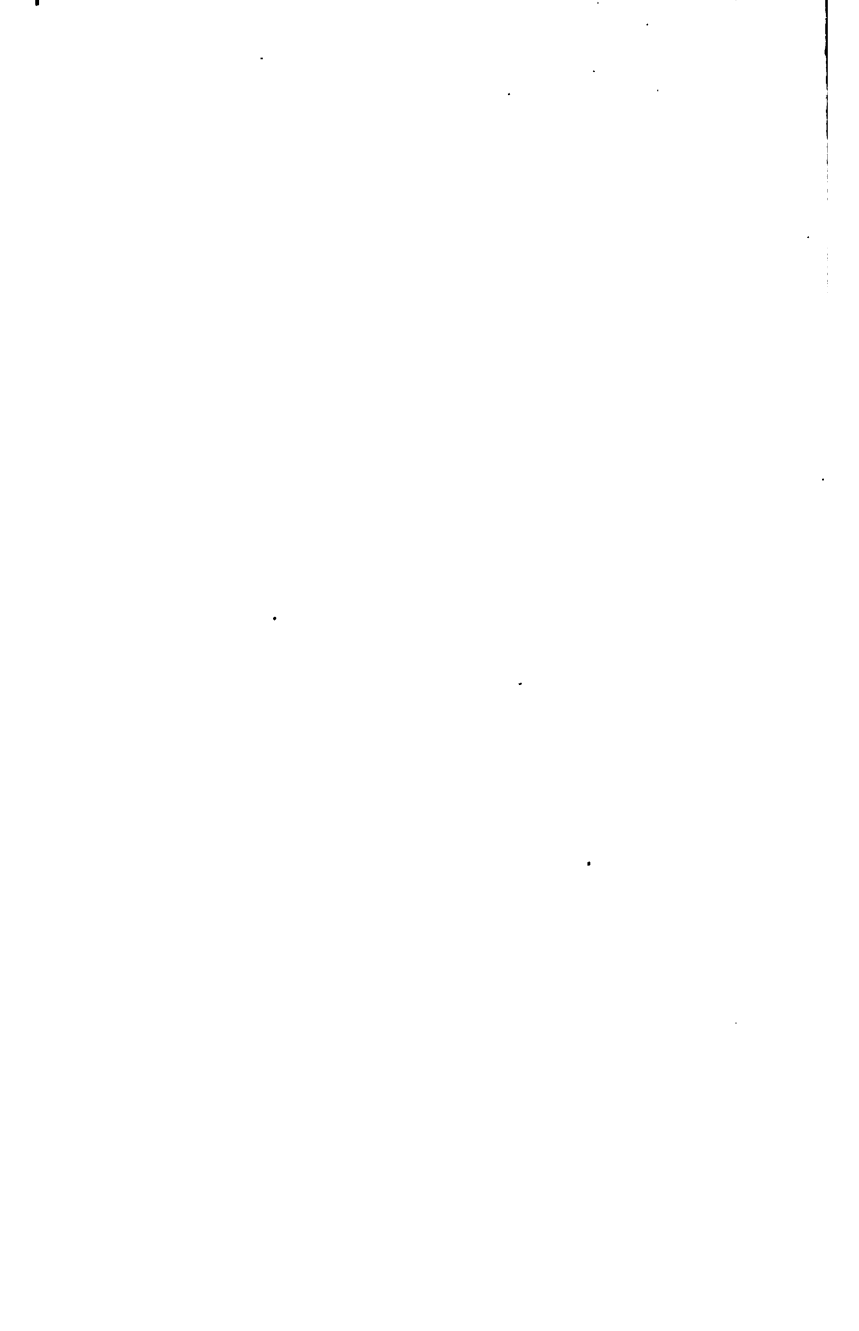
"A power to control . . . a power to hate . . . wise and impersonal . . ."

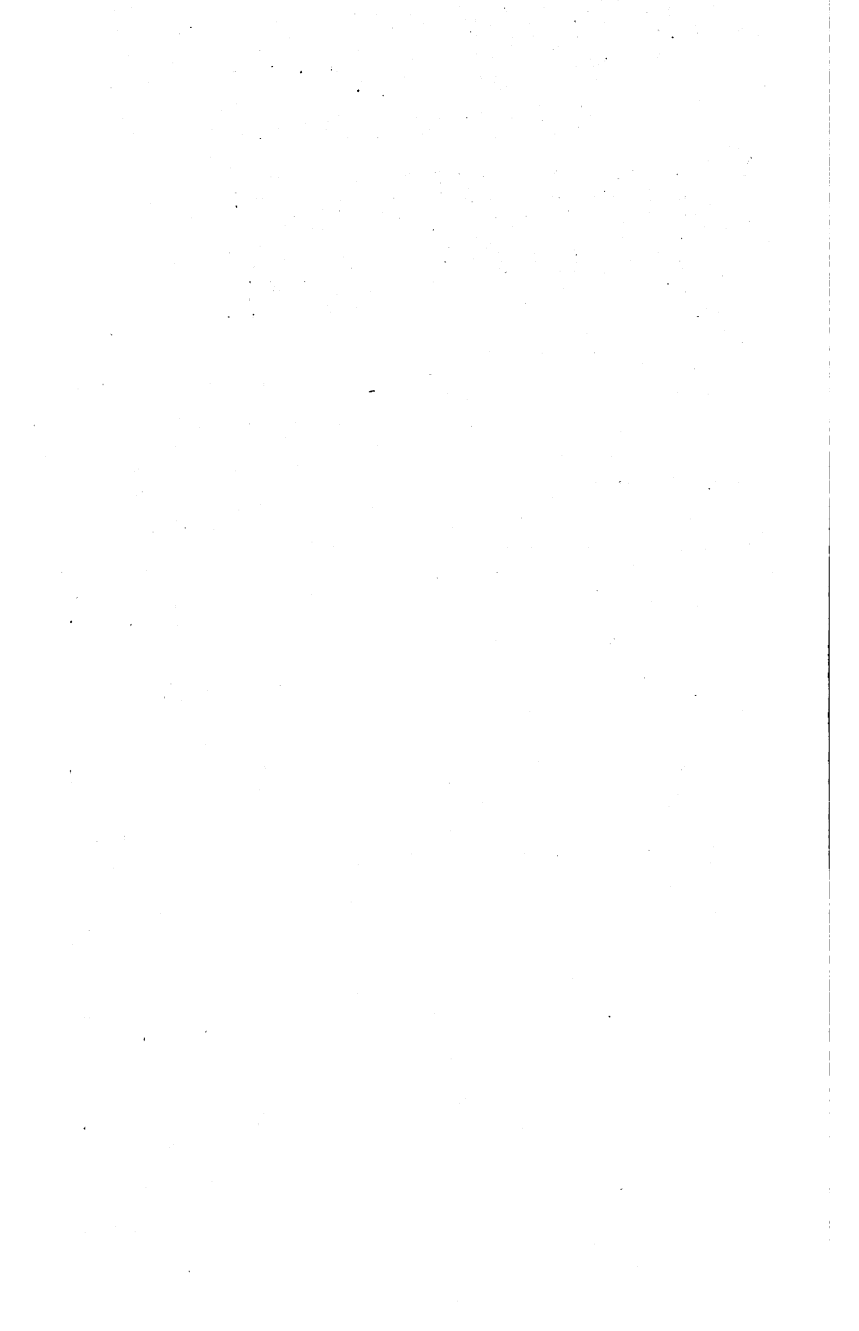
"Isn't God there?" he cried at last. "Isn't God anywhere?" He stood erect. "I will go and find God," he said.

But all men go to find Him, the armies of their faith thundering before them; on every field their faith is challenged and confused, and on every field they search with outflung arms to come to grips with God.

THE END







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